

Constituent, Confederate, and Conquered Space

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Constituent, Confederate, and Conquered Space

The Emergence of the Mittani State

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Berlin, November 2012

Eva Cancik-Kirschbaum, Nicole Brisch, Jesper Eidem

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Introduction

... In that Empire, the craft of Cartography attained such Perfection that the Map of a Single province covered the space of an entire City, and the Map of the Empire itself an entire Province. In the course of Time, these Extensive maps were found somehow wanting, and so the College of Cartographers evolved a Map of the Empire that was of the same Scale as the Empire and that coincided with it point for point.

J.L. Borges, "Of Exactitude in Science." *A Universal History of Infamy* (1954) p. 131

The 'Mittani empire' is one of the most enigmatic political structures in Mesopotamian history, largely due to the lack of written documentation from within the state. Reconstructing the emergence and the organisation of this state, whose territory encompassed Upper Mesopotamia touching the Levant in the West and the piedmont plains of the Zagros in the East, as well as parts of Anatolia at the height of its power, is exceedingly difficult. Yet, new research in the past few decades has shown that such a reconstruction is not entirely impossible. This volume represents an approach to the question of how a territory in Upper Mesopotamia of such unprecedented size could be kept under Mittani rule over such a considerable amount of time.

The papers collected here originated from the conference "Constituent, Confederate, and Conquered Space: The Case of the Mittani Transition". The original aim of the conference was to gain an idea of how the Mittani state emerged in Upper Mesopotamia by examining, on the one hand, previous political and cultural structures in Upper Mesopotamia and northern Syria, and, on the other hand, by studying the partly contemporary Hittite kingdom, whose actions may have contributed significantly to the rise of the Mittani state. Underlying this approach is a rather general question: to what extent is the nature of conquered territory constitutive for the organisation of political space? Is the specific character of the Mittani state therefore mainly a result of contact between differing modes of spatial organisation co- and preexisting in the region? To put it another way: was the success and failure of former or coexisting political structures of any consequence to the formation of a newly emerging state?

The example of Mittani presents a particularly attractive case study since it is linked to a rather complicated ethnic history. Seemingly, the first language of major parts of the population was Hurrian, though Akkadian dialects prevailed in the peripheral regions as

well. However, the ruling elites of Mittani show some linguistic affiliations to the Indo-Aryan group of languages even though they probably spoke Hurrian, a language that together with Urartian forms its own language family. For a long time the paradigm of connecting immigrating Indo-Aryan clans to a surge in technological innovations (for example, the art of the horse-drawn chariot) and to a particular style of governance (for example, confederate models of rule) dominated the scientific discourse on Mittani. Thus, the discussion of Mittanian hegemony is to some extent related to questions of appropriation and cultural identity. Scholars still disagree on the importance of this ethno-linguistic affiliation for the reconstruction of the Mittani state (see the contributions by von Dassow, de Martino, and Schwartz in this volume). The same holds true when it comes to naming and describing Mittani as a socio-political and cultural phenomenon: it is variously called the Mittani¹ “polity” (Schwartz, this volume), “kingdom” (von Dassow, this volume), or simply “state” (Yoffee, this volume). The editors felt it was important to allow these variations to stand as areas where future research may be conducted and to show just how difficult the reconstruction of this ancient territorial state is.

In the cuneiform sources the term Mittani is commonly used to refer to a geopolitical entity whose core region is to be located within the Khabur-Triangle in northern Syria. Contemporary textual sources also refer to this region as Hanigalbat or Naharina (Nahrma). Yet the hegemony of the kings of Mittani encompassed a much larger area, including roughly the area that is today occupied by northern Iraq and northern Syria. The very beginnings and the genesis of what later became “the land of Mittani” lies in the dark. Since Hurrian-speaking groups appear in Upper Mesopotamia as early as the second half of the third millennium, it is commonly assumed that the formation of a Mittani state must have taken place in the course of the sixteenth century.

The ‘imperial’ grasp of the Mittani state is difficult to perceive, especially when it comes to non-written information, i.e. archaeological evidence. One of its two capitals, Waššukanni, has not been located yet, while the second, Taidu, is most probably to be identified either with Tall Brak or with Tall Hamidiye: both sites show massive architectural remains from the Middle and Late Bronze Age. However, since there are very few textual sources from *within* the Mittani state, the degree of actual political coercion exacted by the Mittani state is difficult to grasp.

Our knowledge about Mittani is almost exclusively confined to textual sources from other areas. From these sources we learn, however, that the Mittani state-formation was one of several “super-powers” in the second half of the second millennium, with whom it interacted both peacefully and aggressively: The area of Western Syria plays a major role, since direct claims were made by the Egyptian pharaoh as well as by the Hittite king, and – to a

¹ In modern historiography different renderings of the term can be found, most frequently Mit(t)anni or Maitani. From a linguistic point of view a transcription *Mittani* seems to be preferable.

lesser degree – by the king of Babylon. In consequence, several major battles are mentioned in the sources. Yet there were also phases of intensive exchange and contact – as documented, for example, in some letters (mostly in Akkadian) that the Mittani kings sent to the Egyptian pharaoh, letters that were part of the diplomatic correspondence found at Tall el-Amarna, the foreign office of 14th century Egypt. These letters attest to international diplomatic relations between the important powers in the fourteenth century BC; at least once a dynastic marriage united the royal houses of Mittani and Egypt: king Tushratta of Mittani sent his daughter to the empire at the Nile, accompanied by an extremely generous dowry. The letter that tells us about this event is a most impressive document yet still the only major text in Hurrian from *within* the Mittani state.

Several treaties concluded with kings or members of the royal family of Mittani have been found at Hattuša, the capital of the neighbouring Hittite empire in Anatolia. They attest not only to contacts between the two, but also indicate intensive interaction between the two realms. Even more so, Hittite historiographic (as well as semi-historiographic) texts refer to the formative phase of the Hurrian-speaking kingdom. When during the fourteenth century BC Assyria emerged as another international power player in northern Mesopotamia, the state of Mittani finally had to give way, squeezed between two major antagonists. Towards the end of the fourteenth century the Assyrians subjugated the former Mittanian core and the Euphrates became the frontier-region between Hatti and Aššur.

The conceptual framework of *constituent*, *confederate*, and *conquered* space was of particular importance in this approach. For the purpose of this conference, “constituent space” referred to the basic components of the cultural landscape of Upper Mesopotamia. This includes not only the “natural” landscape (i.e. mountains, valleys, rivers, plains, etc.) but also the basic patterns of settlement and subsistence, as well as basic patterns of material culture specific to, or common across, different political landscapes. In essence, “constituent space” studies local aspects of political entities.

Confederate space was defined as political entities that consist of “confederations” or various kinds of loose cooperation between local political entities. This includes patterns of economic, social, or political organization beyond local political entities, such as ethno-linguistic or tribal areas or patterns of exchange through trade. Beyond this, “confederate space” can also include cultural co-operations as manifested in religious customs or literary heritage.

Last but not least, *conquered space* described structures created through the expansion of political entities seeking to enlarge their spheres of political and economic control. In studying the ancient Near East we have typically understood these overarching political structures as imperial formations, referring to them as *empire(s)*. This may seem anachronistic, since modern historians link the term empire to formations of early modern times – most (but not all) colonial empires, such as the Tsarist empire or the British empire. Yet this usage does not coincide with the original meaning of *imperium* as used in an ancient

Roman context: there *imperium* referred to the geographical expansion and temporal extension of power. This connotation is much closer to what we observe in the ancient Near East – thus, the use of the term *empire* should be linked to this notion of ‘extended power-relations’, which may or may not leave traces in the conquered territory. An example of such a “conquered space” in the early second millennium in Upper Mesopotamia is the well-documented attempt by Samsī-Addu I to build an empire.

This terminology was designed to provide a structural framework for the contributions presented in this volume. During the conference a variety of perspectives and different scales of observation were presented, including discussions of mechanisms of Mittani governance, and the editors decided to rearrange the contributions according to a phenomenological scheme.

The first section of this volume, *Imperial Constructs: Modes of Governance*, offers the most recent research and thinking on the emergence of the Mittani state and its inner workings.² Because the textual information about the Mittani state is so fragmentary, it is necessary to turn to sources from areas that were under Mittani state rule or interacted with it in other ways. Although this offers mostly indirect evidence, it can nevertheless help us to reconstruct how the Mittani state came into being and was able to rule over such a large territory. As von Dassow (this volume) rightly points out, there was no single model of governance throughout the Mittani empire. They ruled over the various kingdoms by exercising only mild control and by adapting their strategies to local needs. This point is reinforced by Otto (this volume), who points out that the Mittani not only ruled over kingdoms, such as Alalakh and Ugarit, but also over collectively-governed polities in the Euphrates valley. This is strongly supported by the archaeological evidence as analysed by Otto, indicating that Mittani left local structures intact, whether based on kingship or collective government by elders and mayors, as long as they received what they wanted. In spite of this progress, de Martino reminds us that the beginnings of the Mittani state are still far from certain. Textual sources written in Hittite are still the most important source for the reconstruction of these beginnings. Through a careful analysis of these sources, a consensus is now emerging that the rise of Mittani was made possible by the destruction of the Amorite kingdom of Yamḥad and of Syrian potentates (de Martino and Klinger, this volume). It remains an open question whether or not de Martino is right in suggesting that the origins of the Mittani state lie in military conflicts, yet it is certain that its origins were accompanied by frequent military conflicts.

2 The question as to whether or not the Mittani state (or other states and kingdoms discussed in this volume) constituted an “empire” is beyond the scope of the conference and these proceedings. The question of empires in the ancient Near East is still subject to debate and is too complex to be adequately addressed here.

The contributions to the second section of this book, *Political Landscapes: Antecedents in Upper Mesopotamia*, sought to illuminate the political foundations on which the Mittani state was built. This was deemed important because no state ever exists in a vacuum and the Mittani and Hurrians did not arrive on the political and cultural scene ‘out of the blue’. This is connected to the idea that settlements and modes of existence are in part also determined by geographical conditions (*constituent space*) (see also the contributions to the next section).

At first glance, the kingdom of Ebla seems to be fairly distant – in terms of chronology – an Early Dynastic state formation at the periphery of Mesopotamia, seen from a perspective centered on Sumer and Akkad. However, the picture Biga presents in this volume shows on the one hand to what degree Ebla serves as a model of Mesopotamian city-state in its different aspects (political, social and cultural). And on the other hand it becomes quite clear that the way the Eblaite kingdom organised its territory and made far-reaching claims of power is possibly very similar to the way in which the Mittani kingdom might have operated. In fact, as Biga points out, some of the cities that were important under Mittani were already important during the kingdom of Ebla, indicating a certain degree of systemic continuity in northern Syria. Michel’s contribution is devoted to the Old Assyrian documentation resulting from the trade network between the city of Aššur and Anatolia during the nineteenth and eighteenth centuries BC. As is well known Hurrian presence in the region goes back to the third millennium. The business correspondence of the Old Assyrian merchants shows indications – albeit slight – that Hurrians were involved to some extent in long-distance trade relations. In doing so they still seem to be part of the indigenous population of the area. Some suggestive hints regarding the early history of Mittani are provided in Eidem’s paper, which describes Hurrian polities in the Zagros in interaction with the Kingdom of Samsī-Addu I and the subsequent expansion of political control into the plains of northeastern Iraq. This no doubt short-lived phenomenon, although not representing the concrete origins of Mittani, may still have served as their inspiration. The evidence discussed by Eidem also highlights particular socio-political structures which may have formed the basis for the relative success of Mittani hegemony. In light of the different modes of governance that can be observed throughout the Mittani empire it is also interesting to note that structures of political fragmentation already existed in the eighteenth century BC in northern Syria (Guichard, this volume). The archives from Mari indicate that Hurrians were located to the north of the Upper Khabur area and interacted closely with Amorites. This gives us yet another small piece of the puzzle, demonstrating that a certain amount of continuity existed in this geographical area. Yet, Guichard also notes that political instability could often lead to quick emigration and the resettlement of peoples elsewhere, something that may also be visible in the settlement patterns discussed below.

The final section of this volume discusses the *Cultural Landscapes: Regional Diversity vs. Political Unity*. Archeological investigations of settlement patterns involve different methodologies, from landscape-survey to the interpretation of data obtained from remote sensing

and satellite imagery. At best, these methods should be combined, each of them yielding different types and scales of data. However, when it comes to inserting these data into a socio-political framework, especially in historical periods, two major problems become evident: it is not easy to combine the different scales involved (how many tokens / hectares, etc.). Moreover, each individual survey is based on different methodologies and therefore supplies data that sometimes cannot be integrated into a single map. Koliński's contribution to this volume is yet another reminder that we have to be careful when using data from archaeological surveys, particularly when we try to connect them to historical developments. As is well known, linking potsherds to the political landscape is rather problematic, since ceramics from the periods in question allow for only a rough allocation in time, and besides, it must be kept in mind that pots $\neq$ people. Nevertheless, the results of Lyonnet's and Faivre's survey (this volume) may offer some indications of population movements in the material record that are also suggested in the texts (see Guichard, this volume). While there seems to be a change in settlement patterns from the Khabur period to the Mittani period, Lyonnet has maintained that there are no substantial changes in population numbers. A major problem encountered by archeological observation of 'settlement' is that it usually excludes a major feature of 'inhabited space' in Upper Mesopotamia, namely non-sedentary populations and mobile groups. What exactly these involve in terms of socio-political and cultural phenomena is subject to debate; obviously the language of text-based studies differs substantially from the perspective of material culture.

Both Meijer and Guichard also point to the importance of interactions between settled and nomadic populations in the geographical zone that is the topic of this volume. In fact, both Meijer and Guichard use the term "symbiosis" to describe the relationship between nomadic and sedentary people. Both underline the importance of taking geographical factors into consideration when discussing settlement patterns and modes of subsistence in northern Syria and Upper Mesopotamia. As Meijer notes, many cities in this area are located in places that favour animal husbandry as an economic basis of existence. Meijer suggests replacing the opposition of "*settled vs. nomadic*" with the "less stringent *urban-rural*" (italics in the original). The opposition "settled vs. nomadic" has come repeatedly under criticism and it is important that we recognize that the opposition may be less rigid than often assumed. Schwartz (this volume) points out that the opposition "urban-rural" may also be problematic. Chambon, although basing his analysis on a very different kind of evidence, aims at defining socio-cultural space through the study of measurement systems in administrative texts. We have to imagine ancient measurement systems as different from modern, standardized ones, and it has long been recognized that studying these systems helps to define socio-cultural practices. The rich textual data from the Mari archives, albeit pre-Mittani, show that there is a tradition of different measurement systems coexisting in northern Syria. Different polities used these different measurement systems, and so, ideally, measurement systems can indicate zones of political influence or dominion.

A final section has been devoted to *Reflections* – both contributors, Schwartz and Yoffee, acting as respondents during the conference itself. Their contributions highlight points of disagreement as well as perspectives for future research. Thus, a number of interesting points that touch upon key themes of current research emerged from this conference: they revolve around the nature of the state in the ancient Near East, and, in connection with this, the complex relationship between local, regional, and territorial government. But the question as to whether political and historical developments that are known from historical sources also change the material culture is still open (Schwartz, this volume).

Several contributions wrestle with gaining a better understanding of *how* exactly the Mittani ruled over such a large territory. Written documents are our most important sources for reconstructing the history of Mittani. Yet it is vital that we not rely on historical texts alone in attempting to answer questions pertaining to governance: as Chambon (this volume) shows, the study of administrative documents and the measurement systems that are found in them is equally valuable in mapping out areas of political and cultural influence in Upper Mesopotamia. Von Dassow (this volume) suggested that we have to imagine the map of the Mittani empire not as an “area of contiguous territorial control” but rather as a “network of points of control, each point the seat of a kingdom or province and each situated within its own cluster of points, ...”. Otto (this volume) similarly argued that Mittani left local political structures intact, as can also be seen from the archaeological record.

If any conclusion can be drawn from the contributions to this volume, it is that political power in the ancient Near East was always fragile. Many contributions have pointed out the tensions between different polities (de Martino, Klinger) but also tensions between local, regional, and centralized forms of government (von Dassow, Otto, Guichard, Chambon), and we have to ask with Yoffee: what is the collapse of a centralized state? As Yoffee points out, a collapse is always an opportunity for someone (or something?) else, in this case, perhaps the collapse of northern Syrian polities and the kingdom of Yamḥad represented an opportunity for a new power to emerge: the Mittani. But conflicts and wars were not the only forms of exchange; as Biga and Michel have shown, peaceful forms of business and trade relations were always important in northern Syria, Upper Mesopotamia, and eastern Anatolia – and elsewhere. Archaeological (and geographical) evidence must also be considered when attempting to throw light upon the Mittani state: on the one hand, data from archaeological surveys show possible changes (or continuities) in settlement patterns, therefore helping us understand whether such patterns existed independently of political supra-structures or whether they changed due to various circumstances (for example, politics or climate). Nevertheless, Schwartz’s question as to whether political change is reflected in material culture is an important one and one that needs to be addressed in greater detail in future research.

As has become clear from this short overview, in spite of the division into three different sections, many contributions show significant connections across sections. It should be equally clear from this brief summary that we still know much too little about the Mittani state/polity/empire to draw certain conclusions. However, we would like to view all the contributions to this volume as pieces of a puzzle that will aid future work on this fascinating ancient Near Eastern state.

I Imperial Constructs – Modes of Governance

Levantine Polities under Mittanian Hegemony

By the time Mittani emerges into the light of history – that is, the available written sources – it is a fully formed kingdom in possession of an empire. We can glimpse a few moments of its expansion: toward the mid-15th century, for example, Mittani acquired suzerainty over Alalakh and then Kizzuwatna, presumably adding these two realms to an existing stock of vassal states. Somewhat earlier, Egyptian armies under Amenhotep I (or perhaps his successor Thutmose I) encountered Mittani for the first time, evidently as a regional hegemon if not already an imperial power. And Old Hittite sources permit peering back in time to the kingdom's infancy in the early 16th century, before it acquired either the name Mittani or an empire. Compiling all references to Mittani (or proto-Mittani), under this designation or others, suffices to produce a general outline of the kingdom and its history.¹ But the events and processes through which the polity called Mittani came into being, grew, and governed are, to date, illuminated by scarcely a scrap of direct evidence. Not only have we no archives or royal inscriptions from Mittani itself – only a handful of letters and documents issued thence that were found in their addressees' archives – we have no legends of its founding kings as we do for the empire of Akkad, nor have we any other sort of literary testimony, such as that which re-copied royal hymns and letters provide for the kings of Ur. By the time the sources become sufficient in number and variety to produce a reasonably detailed portrait of Mittani, it is an empire in the agony of demise. This state of affairs is not Mittani's fault – its scribes valiantly adapted cuneiform to write Hurrian with greater phonological precision than the Akkadian and Sumerian they also employed in writing; but most of the records they must once have produced have either failed to survive or eluded discovery. It is just bad luck, Mittani's and ours.

We are thus thrown back on the evidence of records kept or produced by those with whom Mittani interacted. Here it should be noted that we call the entity under discussion Mittani not because it was usually called by that name in its own day, but because we find it convenient to use a single unambiguous designation for the polity also known as Hani-galbat, whose king was “king of the Hurrian troops”, and whose country also received the

* University of Minnesota. I am grateful to the other workshop participants for their contributions to the discussion, as well as for remarks on sources pertinent to my own theme which I had overlooked.

¹ For such an outline, from the perspective of Alalakh, see von Dassow 2008, 12–64, esp. 19–23. From a broader perspective, Giorgieri (2005) offers a selective overview treating the structure of Mittani's political hegemony and the cultural influence exercised by Mittani upon the regions under its sway.

West Semitic designation Naharina (var. Nahrima), “river-land” (or “rivers twain”), which was preferred in Egypt.²

In the present paper I discuss the shape, structure, and dynamics of Mittani’s empire in the Levant, and of the polities under its rule. This involves addressing questions such as how Mittani acquired hegemony over Levantine kingdoms, how it governed them, and how those realms responded to Mittanian rule. (It should also involve Mittani’s interaction with Levantine kingdoms it did not rule, which however is not encompassed in the present paper.) The largest number of textual sources that bear directly on such questions derives from 15th-century Alalakh. These may be supplemented by sources from Arraphe on the opposite side of the empire, while various other sites or text corpora yield somewhat less, or less useful, material. Within Mittani’s domain, this material includes one or more tablets apiece from Terqa, Tall Bazi, Tall Brak (ancient Nagar), Umm el-Marra, and Emar; beyond the empire’s periphery, the archives of Hattuša, Egyptian texts, and the Amarna correspondence contribute perspectives, data, and soundbites.³

This body of evidence, which has grown but incrementally over the course of the last century, discloses so little information about the Mittani Empire that the resulting vacuum attracts specious modes of explanation. Two interconnected approaches to the study of Mittani are to be excluded at the outset: 1) explaining the kingdom’s origins and successful growth by reference to the arrival of a new population, specifically, an Aryan one; and 2) explaining these phenomena by reference to the development of a new military technology, namely horse-drawn chariotry. Having addressed both issues *in extenso* elsewhere,⁴ I shall merely summarize them here.

1. The kingdom called Mittani was not the creation of an Aryan population newly arrived in southwestern Asia. A tiny quantity of Indo-Aryan vocabulary and proper nouns became incorporated into the Hurrian language of Mittani, while also spreading among realms with which Mittani interacted, over the course of the empire’s floruit.⁵ Apparently no one in Mittani spoke the Indo-Aryan source language, for the borrowed lexical items were unproductive in the borrowing language, there is no Indo-Aryan grammatical interference therein, and no other extant evidence indicates that the donor language had ever been the

2 Recently Valério (2011) has argued for reading Hani-GAL-bat as Hani-rabbat, which he would interpret as “Great Hani” and relate to the designation Hana, denoting mobile pastoralists and the land they occupied. Addressing his arguments in full will have to await another occasion; for the nonce, suffice it to note that spellings with GAL_o occur in three different archives (ibid.: 178), a distribution that cannot be explained as the outcome of scribal misapprehension or error.

3 To this list should be added the five-line letter found at Tell Hammām et-Turkmān and dated c. 1500, assuming that it was indeed sent by a king of Mittani (van Soldt 1995: 277–278). The letter, a concise directive from “the king” to one Šatuwatri that one Karukka(ma) should come quickly, is so laconic that it contributes virtually no historical information beyond its existence and findspot.

4 von Dassow 2008, 77–90.

5 The much tinier quantity of Indo-Aryan lexical material that entered Kassite, perhaps independently, is left aside in the present context.

living cultural property of any part of the kingdom's population. The scant Indo-Aryan linguistic material does not attest the presence, much less the dominance, of an Indo-Aryan-speaking population. Instead, the kingdom's identity was "Hurrian", as attested by numerous references to the king of Mittani as "king of Hurri(-land)" or "king of the Hurrian troops" (not "king of the Aryan troops" or the like). While the practice of bestowing throne names of Indo-Aryan derivation on most of Mittani's kings suggests significant contact with an Indo-Aryan-speaking population, it does not indicate that the royal dynasty (much less the ruling class) was of Aryan "blood" – whatever that might mean.

2. Mittani's success did not result from the innovation of using horse-drawn chariots in war, or in any case, this innovation did not belong to Mittani. The development of chariotry was shared by the kingdom's contemporaries and opponents, and the evidence does not suggest that it originated among the polities or peoples antecedent to Mittani.⁶ Though military success must have been essential to the foundation and growth of Mittani, military innovation was not.

Hence, no special role can be attributed to the social class associated with chariotry and denoted by the Hurrianized Indo-Aryan word *maryanni* (on this class, see further below). The formation of this class was moreover posterior to the formation of Mittani; it was not a cause of the empire's creation but an effect thereof.⁷

6 Against the view that the chariot was invented within the Near East during the early second millennium BC, continuing the long indigenous development of equid-drawn wheeled vehicles (Raulwing 2000, esp. 59–99, with exhaustive references to previous literature), David Anthony presents a convincing argument for the invention of the chariot in the Eurasian steppe, specifically in the region of the Sintashta culture just east of the Ural Mountains, during the last century of the third millennium BC (Anthony 2007, esp. ch. 15). The chariot is defined as a two-wheeled vehicle having spoked wheels and drawn by bitted horses, controlled by a standing driver (see *ibid.* 397; similarly Raulwing 2000, 43). Anthony argues that the key innovations, bits and spoked wheels, appeared centuries earlier in the steppe than in the Near East, according to the evidence of well-dated finds at Sintashta and related sites. He further marshals evidence that the chariots of the steppe were indeed made and used for war (not merely ceremony or display; Anthony 2007, 399–405); makes a persuasive case (despite a proclivity for over-interpreting the evidence in accord with the model, and for a high dating of the Rg Veda and Avesta) that the makers of these chariots probably spoke an Indo-Iranian language and may even have identified themselves as "Aryans" in the Vedic sense (*ibid.*: 405–411); and proposes a historico-geographical pathway through which the innovation of chariotry, the requisite horses, and the accompanying Indo-Iranian vocabulary could have entered southwestern Asia from the Eurasian steppe (ch. 16, esp. 421–427 and 452–457). But none of this, however true, validates the clichéd notions Anthony recycles about Mittani (which – repeating a common error – he mistakes for a people) and its origins. No matter where chariots were invented and what language their makers spoke, claims like "an Old Indic-speaking group of chariot warriors took control of a Hurrian-speaking kingdom in north Syria about 1500 BCE" and "the Mitanni dynasts came from the same ethnolinguistic population as the more famous Old Indic-speakers who simultaneously pushed eastward into the Punjab" (*ibid.*, 454) remain, at best, unfounded.

7 The validity of these statements is not materially affected by the aberrantly early attestation of "*maryanni troops*" in a tablet from Tall Leilan (L.87–887), disclosed by Jesper Eidem in his paper for the present workshop (see below, p. 142 with n. 16). Assuming not only that the reading is correct but that it does in fact attest the Hurrianized Indo-Aryan word *maryanni*, not some homophone, this occurrence of the term predates any other by a couple of centuries even on the lowest chronology. While the appearance of troops denoted *maryanni* in the Old Babylonian period begs for explanation, it does not warrant assuming the existence of a social class denoted *maryanni* (nor can

To fill in the information vacuum by positing an invasion of chariot-riding Aryans, or the like, is an exercise in pseudo-historical wish fulfillment, not historical explanation. Incidentally, no more can the rise of Mittani be accounted for by the expansion and dominance of Hurrians (or Hurrian-speaking people) than by the imaginary Indo-Aryan takeover. The mode of explanation whereby historical change is supposed to result from movements of peoples remains as popular as it is simplistic. People do move, sometimes in groups, and sometimes as members of an “ethnic” group, but seldom is such movement the predominant factor in causing historical change. The like can be said of attributing a causal role to the introduction of new military technology (which, incidentally, never remains the property of a single population group for long): the new technology operates as a factor only in association with the factors that promoted its own development. In the case at hand, explanations of these types are neither supported by the evidence, nor do they provide a plausible or sufficient account of it.

While invoking a *deus ex machina* – like a spurious population influx – is not a valid historical method, the work of history does require going beyond merely accumulating and paraphrasing evidence that bears on the problem at issue. That is, although collecting the pertinent sources and data remains a prerequisite for the inquiry at hand, methods of inference are necessary to develop a theory that can account for the observable data while going some way toward elucidating the structure and governance of Mittani’s empire. In what follows, therefore, besides cataloguing sources and their contents I shall explore synthetic approaches that may help outline a model of Mittanian rule.

1 The political landscape

The geographical reach of Mittani’s rule can be roughly plotted on the basis of the available sources. Its empire extended east to the land of Arraphe, north to the latitude of Lake Van, south to Terqa, and west across the lands formerly subject to Halab (without, however, automatically including Emar and Aštata); for a time, it extended as far west as Kizzuwatna and as far south as Tunip or even beyond (before one and then another kingdom was lost to Hatti).⁸ Our modern habit is to extrapolate contiguous territorial control from such data points and to color in the map so that the empire encompasses those points. However, the effective control of even the most powerful Late Bronze Age polity generally did not reach far beyond the hinterland of settlements and, on a good day, the routes that linked them. Therefore the map of Mittani’s empire should instead be visualized as a network of points

such a class be considered an element of “Hurrian social structure”, pace Eidem; were it so, such a class would have existed before Hurrian speakers ever borrowed the Indo-Aryan word *mārya* to give it a new name).

⁸ Tunip’s play for Egypt’s attention in EA 59, with its claim to have been subordinate to Egypt in the past, selects elements of its history to make an argument that in the long run failed.

of control, each point the seat of a kingdom or province and each situated within its own cluster of points; the space between or beyond these linked nodes can scarcely be counted for the domain of Mittani or any other territorial state.⁹ (Later, the Hittite kingdom succeeded to some extent in changing this model of the political landscape.)

1.1 Vassal kingdoms: the example of Alalakh

What kind of control did Mittani exercise over the polities subject to its hegemony? What was the structure of governance, and what were the mechanisms through which Mittani ruled? The textual records from different sites suggest diverse answers, indicating that a single model did not apply throughout the empire. I shall take Alalakh as a point of departure for examining these issues, since Alalakh yields the largest number and variety of pertinent texts (which do not amount to a great many). It will be useful to begin by itemizing these sources, although most of them have received ample scholarly attention before; the list that follows summarizes their content so far as it relates to the matter at hand.¹⁰

- Two parity treaties: ALT 3, between Idrimi of Alalakh and Pilliya of Kizzuwatna, and ALT 2, between Niqmepa of Alalakh and Ir-Teššub of Tunip. ALT 3, an agreement on the mutual extradition of fugitives that is formulated entirely in reciprocal terms, was concluded between the parties under the authority of Parrattarna, king of Mittani. ALT 2 is a more comprehensive agreement, formulated from the standpoint of each party addressing the other, that addresses various issues involving movement of people and accountability between the two realms; it was concluded under the authority of the “king of the Hurrian troops”, overlord of both parties, and was void if either broke faith with their lord.
- Two records of legal decisions by Sauštatar, king of Mittani, in favor of Niqmepa: ALT 13, which denies the claim of a subject of Alalakh to Hanigalbatean status (discussed further below under “Sociopolitical organization”, p. 22–28); and ALT 14, which vindicates Niqmepa’s claim to the town of Alawari against Sunaššura of Kizzuwatna.

9 I have previously made this point in discussing the geography of Alalakh’s realm (von Dassow 2008, 64–67). Later, Casana argued for a similar view of the political geography of Late Bronze Age states, including Alalakh, in an article published in February 2009 that fails to make any reference to my 2008 book, relying instead on a few pages of my 1997 dissertation. Casana pushes the argument too far, while ignoring the majority of the pertinent textual evidence (as well as pertinent scholarship), when he asserts that since a polity was not constituted by contiguous territory but by its “ownership” of particular towns, a given town belonging to a given polity could be “anywhere” (Casana 2009, 25).

10 Fuller discussion of each text, with references to previous literature, may be found by consulting the index of sources in von Dassow 2008, 543–551. Two of these texts, ALT 13 and 14, have now been reedited by Niedorf (2008, 239–247; in his numbering they are Texts 31.1 and 31.2), who also treats each of the other Alalakh texts discussed here, in greater or lesser detail.

- Four letters conveying orders on the authority of “the king” (of Mittani). Three are letters from Tiriš-ra, evidently a Mittanian official, to Niqmepa: in ALT 110, Tiriš-ra instructs Niqmepa to seize some men and have them brought to him; ALT 111 concerns a certain man’s movable property and the provision of an escort for him; and in ALT 112, Tiriš-ra informs Niqmepa that a lawsuit before the king has been decided against him, and orders Niqmepa to give the plaintiff the women he sued for.¹¹ Another letter, ALT 108, is addressed by the king to one Utti, and orders him to release toll-free the asses Niqmepa had complained about; presumably Utti ruled a neighboring realm, and this tablet ended up in Niqmepa’s archive because he was the beneficiary of the decision it conveyed.¹²
- Two administrative records refer to Mittani, unfortunately without contextual information adequate to tell this reader what is going on. ALT 224 lists numbers of men in association with particular towns within Alalakh’s realm under the heading “these men are going to the land of Mittani”; after a break the list continues recording numbers of men in association with more towns, the palace, tasks or purposes, Mittani, and individuals, including Tiriš-ra.¹³ ALT 340, a more laconically opaque text, records nine oxherds in some relation to “the land of Hurri”, presumably meaning Mittani (whether the herdsmen or their oxen may be going or coming is not clear).¹⁴

11 Niedorf (2008, 41) infers that the plaintiff in ALT 112 (his Text 2.9), Arip-šaniḫu, must be either a vassal (like Niqmepa) or a subject directly subordinate to the Mittanian king. However, Arip-šaniḫu need no more be a Mittanian vassal or subject than Irip-Ḫazi, the plaintiff of ALT 13 (see above; and Niedorf 2008, 241), in order to sue Niqmepa before the king of Mittani.

12 Although the seal impressed on ALT 108 is not identifiable as that of a king of Mittani, and moreover Utti is otherwise unknown (he can hardly be identical to Utti, the co-seller of a woman in ALT 67), no other king in a position to give orders affecting Niqmepa could have been identified simply as “king” with no indication of his name or realm. Cf. Niedorf 2008, 39 (Text 2.5 = ALT 108), with n. 144.

13 One difficulty in understanding ALT 224 lies in the text’s use of the preposition *ana* (“to/for” in normal Akkadian usage): the men “going to (*ana*) Mittani” are recorded as 5 men *ana* town A, 5 men *ana* town B, and so forth (likewise on the reverse, which may have its own heading). As *ana* is sometimes used in the meaning of *ina*, “from,” in texts from Alalakh and elsewhere in the Levant (reflecting the usage of West Semitic *l-*), it could be so used in ALT 224, which would then record men “from (*ana*)” individual towns and going “to (*ana*)” Mittani; but that interpretation cannot be carried through consistently on the reverse. On the use of *ana* for *ina* at Alalakh, see Márquez Rowe 1998, 74, who suggests that Hurrian rather than West Semitic substrate influence may account for the “indiscriminate” use of these prepositions. ALT 224 (= Text 416.1) is briefly treated in Niedorf 2008, 83, with n. 316.

14 In ALT 340 (not discussed in von Dassow 2008; Text 415.18 in Niedorf 2008), three entries of unclear structure are summed up as “9 oxherds, KUR *Ḫur-ri* ŠUB-*ti*” (or conceivably “9 herdsmen whose oxen KUR *Ḫur-ri* ŠUB-*ti*”); if ŠUB-*ti* stands for a verbal adjective, it is not obvious which verb in what meaning is intended. Niedorf reads instead KUR *Ḫar-ri-ru-ti* (1998, 527; 1999, 891; 2008, 81), but this seems unlikely, such a land being otherwise unattested. In the Alalakh tablets, Hurri also appears in a list of garments, ALT 416, where certain garments are qualified as “(of the) land of Arraphe” (l. 3), “Hurrian” (*Ḫur-ri*, with no KUR determinative, ll. 5, 30), or “Subarean” (ŠU.BIR, also without KUR, l. 7). As Zaccagnini observed (1979, 7), to distinguish between Hurri and a subordinate realm would indicate that the former refers to Mittani.

- Finally, the inscription on the statue of Idrimi relates how Idrimi came to accept the suzerainty of Parrattarna, “king of the Hurrian troops”, in order to secure his position as king of Alalakh.¹⁵

And those are all the texts among the published material from the site of Alalakh that yield direct evidence concerning Alalakh’s relations with Mittani.

From this slender body of evidence scholars have often concluded that Mittani imposed only light control over the kingdoms it ruled, permitting them to carry on their own conflicts and foreign affairs as they pleased provided they did not depart the empire’s fold.¹⁶ That is a curious assessment. At Alalakh we see lawsuits over the citizenship of individuals, the allegiance of towns, interstate tolls, and individuals’ claims to persons and property being decided by the king of Mittani. This indicates not only that Mittani exercised both broad and specific powers over its subject states, but that local and imperial affairs were highly integrated. That conclusion is supported by the rather more ample evidence from Arraphe, Mittani’s easternmost subject kingdom, whose differing geographic situation does not make it irrelevant to the western half of the empire. Texts from Nuzi and Kirkuk attest close judicial and military cooperation between Arraphe and Hanigalbat (= Mittani), as well as a variety of social and economic linkages.¹⁷ The king of Mittani could also intervene in Arraphe’s territorial organization by reallocating towns from one grantee to another, as attested by HSS IX 1.¹⁸ Meanwhile, Emar has yielded the only sources known to date that refer to tribute required from a subject polity by (apparently) Mittani. Four documents reflect the demand of tribute (*arana*) on two occasions, one each during the reigns of two successive rulers of Emar’s “First Dynasty”, the tribute recorded was heavy, and city property

15 On the historical interpretation of the inscription of Idrimi, see von Dassow 2008, 23–45. The archaeological context of Idrimi’s statue, which bears on its historical interpretation, has lately been investigated by Fink (2007; 2010), whose examination of the evidence yields the result that the statue’s findspot was not in the penultimate level of Alalakh, as Woolley had determined upon the close of the 1939 season, but in the last phase of Level IV. See esp. Fink 2007, 195–199; 2010, 27–30 and 56–60.

16 See, e.g., Drower’s statement that Mittani’s “vassals were held on a loose rein” (1973, 436); similarly Van De Mieroop, “The Mittani state seems to have been a loose political structure ... There was thus probably little influence on the local affairs” (2007, 154). Such assessments do not reflect thorough consideration of the available evidence, little as it is.

17 The evidence for relations between Arraphe and its overlord was collected by Zaccagnini (1979; though most of the texts come from Nuzi, Arraphe is really the focus of discussion). Particularly relevant here are Zaccagnini’s remarks on coordination between the courts (Zaccagnini 1979, 10) and the military forces (*ibid.*, 20–25) of Arraphe and Hanigalbat. The pertinent sources have lately been augmented by Lion’s publication of a tablet in the Louvre (AO 15551+15552) that records the reconstruction of Nuzi’s fortifications, and mentions that men of Hanigalbat had participated in building them (Lion 2010).

18 This text is the famous “Sauštatar letter”, addressed to Iṭḫi-Teššub (Iṭḫiya), king of Arraphe, by one of Sauštatar’s successors who used his seal; for a translation, with brief discussion, see Wilhelm 2001, 101f. The town that was the object of reallocation had been granted to ‘Amminaya, consort of the crown prince, which limits the warrant for extrapolating from this transaction: one cannot assume that the king of Mittani could similarly appropriate and redistribute the property of every Arraphean subject.

had to be sold to collect the funds to pay it.¹⁹ Whether such tribute payments were exceptional or regular, and on what schedule they might have been demanded, cannot however be inferred from this limited documentation.²⁰

That we are not better informed about what support Mittani's vassals were required to provide their overlord may be accounted a deficiency in the surviving sources, not a deficiency in the empire's capacity to command resources. Egyptian records, notably the inscriptions of Thutmose III, attest that Mittani (a.k.a. Naharin) could and did summon the Levantine kingdoms under its rule to war.²¹

1.2 Other polities

The realms of Alalakh, Arraphe, Kizzuwatna, and Tunip, among others, were each ruled by their own kings under the overlordship of Mittani. Not every polity within the empire possessed a king, however, and the hierarchical relationship linking local monarch to great king did not take the same form in every polity that did. Models of governance that differ from the lord-vassal dyad are evident in the records pertaining to Halab, Tall Bazi, and Terqa.

Among the tablets found at Terqa are several contracts, mostly unpublished, in which the local king is named alongside the Mittanian king.²² The two kings are named together

19 The four Emar documents that refer to tribute payments were examined by Skaist (1998a, with references to earlier literature), who proposed identifying the key term *arana* as a Hurrian loanword meaning "tribute". Associating these four documents with another (Sigrist 1993, no. 6) that refers to the presentation of four princesses of Emar along with a heavy payment to "the king of the land of Hurri", Skaist further proposed that "the king" who demands tribute was the king of Mittani (1998b, 62). While Skaist considered that the period of Emar's subordination to Mittani must have preceded the Hittite conquest of northern Syria in the mid-to-late 14th century (ibid.), Durand and Marti – who reinterpreted the text Sigrist 1993 no. 6 and identified the payment accompanying the princesses as their dowries (2003, 145–149) – dated this incident and the tribute payments to the early 13th century instead (ibid., 156–158). Now, reanalyzing the evidence for the chronology of Late Bronze Age Emar and its archives, Cohen and d'Alfonso (2008) argue for the higher dating, placing Emar's tribute payments to Mittani before even the reign of Suppiluliuma I (see esp. 20 f. and Table 7). Writing in the same volume, Pruszinsky 2008, 77 likewise places these episodes prior to the Hittite conquest of Emar and Aštata, but prefers the date "before Mursili's 9th year".

20 It has been suggested that a tablet from Alalakh, ALT 395, records tribute owed to Mittani (see Wiseman 1953, 14, 104), but it contains no reference to Mittani and may instead be a record of internal revenue: the text lists quantities of silver (due) from three regions within the domain of Alalakh, namely Zalḫe, Amaḫe (?), and its core territory, Mukiš (see von Dassow 2008, 55).

21 For example, the narrative of Thutmose III's first campaign in his annals refers to the support of Naharin and allied lands for the coalition assembled at Megiddo, while the general description of his Syrian campaigns in the Gebel Barkal stela refers to the "numerous armies" of Mittani (for translations of both texts, see Hoffmeier 2000, 7–18). Such references tend to be imprecise, creating an impression of incoherence on the part of Egypt's opponents.

22 These tablets are discussed by Rouault (2001, 10 and 2004, 56 f.), as well as by Charpin (2002, 78). The legend of Qiš-Addu's seal, given in transliteration by Charpin, identifies Qiš-Addu as "king of the land [of Ḫana]". The tablets mentioned in these publications that record the king of Mittani alongside Qiš-Addu are the following, arranged according to the (putative) sequence of Mittanian kings:

with a selection of gods in oath formulae and, apparently, as the joint sellers of town lands. The local king attested in these documents, Qīš-Addu, is named alongside three different Mittanian kings, Saitarna, Parrattarna, and Sausadatra; the last is a variant spelling of the name Sauštatar, and the first has been tentatively identified as a variant of Suttarna, the name of Parrattarna's predecessor. Whether or not that identification is correct, Qīš-Addu's reign evidently lasted through a succession of three kings on the throne of Mittani during the 15th century. Moreover, the relationship in which he and the king of Mittani appear as joint sovereigns at Terqa also endured over the same period. The information available hardly suffices to guess at the nature of this relationship or the underlying governance structure, which may recapitulate a model previously employed at Terqa.²³ Nonetheless the apparent co-rulership of local and superordinate king seems to represent a different structure for integrating local polities into the empire than that implemented in kingdoms like Alalakh and Arraphe.

The two tablets found at Tall Bazi, which, on the basis of their contents, has been identified as ancient Bašīru (a place otherwise unknown to date), attest Mittani's relationship with a polity that was not structured as a monarchy.²⁴ One tablet records Sauštatar's grant of a town, Baidali, to the people of Bašīru (DUMU.MEŠ ^{uru}*Pa-zi-ri*); Sauštatar sealed it with his own seal. The other tablet also records the grant of a town to the people of Bašīru by a king of Mittani, this time Artatama (I), who also sealed the tablet with Sauštatar's seal. The loss of the second tablet's upper right corner entails the loss of the name of the town that is the object of the grant, but the town is described in specific terms: "(The town) [GN], whose [...] neighbor is (the town) *Te?-ru*-[...] and (whose) [...] neighbor is (the town) *Te-ú-a-ab?-x*-[... (in?)] the district of (the town) Halab,²⁵ Artatama has given to the people of (the town) Bašīru." In both transactions, the party with whom the king of Mittani dealt was not a subordinate king but the people of the town, constituted as a polity. Evidently Bašīru did without a king, and its people relied instead on collective self-governance, which they would

Sa-i-tar-na (= Suttarna?)

TQ 12-19

Parrattarna

TQ 12-9, 10, 15, and 16

Sausadatra (= Sauštatar)

TQ 12-6 (and others?)

The reading ¹*Sa-ú-sa-da-at-ra* is provided by Charpin 2002, n. 121.

²³ So according to Rouault 2001, 9 f., with n. 34.

²⁴ The Tall Bazi tablets are published in Sallaberger et al. 2006, with detailed discussion of their archaeological context, textual contents, seal impressions, and historical interpretation.

²⁵ Sallaberger et al. (2006, 98) insist on taking *ḫalšu* to mean "fortress", rather than "district", and they identify the town that is the object of the transaction as a "fortress of Halab", apparently taking *ḫal-šī* ^{uru}*ḫal-pa* in l. 6 as appositive to ^{uru}[GN] in l. 1. This interpretation is hardly self-evident, however, and the fact that *ḫalšu* is ostensibly written in the genitive case would seem to speak against it (since case declension appears to be functional in the language employed to write the document, so far as may be discerned given its limited extent and preservation). They further adduce the fact that Halab was governed by a *ḫalšuḫlu*, "district governor", in support of identifying the granted town as a *ḫalšu*, "fortress", within the land of Halab, which does not follow. On the function of the *ḫalšuḫlu*, see immediately below (n. 26).

have exercised through an assembly or other representative body.²⁶ Mittani, moreover, could also do without their having a king, and without vesting an individual official (whether local leader or royal appointee) with authority over the polity; in other words, the empire was able to exercise hegemony through local collective-governance regimes, as well as through local monarchs.

A different model was instituted in the case of Halab, erstwhile the seat of a great kingdom. Rather than permit Halab to remain under the rule of its own king, who would no doubt attempt to recover the realm's autonomy and former power, Mittani transformed it into a district, *ḫaṣu*, governed by a district governor, *ḫalzoḡli*.²⁷ The implementation of this strategy appears to have begun with Mittani's seizure of Halab and the consequent flight of its royal family in the time of Ilmilimma, father of Idrimi (around 1500); this would be the event politely referred to as a *mašiktu*, "misfortune", in the inscription of Idrimi. Thanks to Mittani's success, Idrimi, having set out to recover his patrimony, in the end had to settle for a domain comprising some of Halab's former possessions but not Halab itself.²⁸ Halab was instead placed under the authority of a *ḫalzoḡli*, as attested by ALT 101, which dates to the reign of Idrimi's successor Niqmepa. ALT 101 records the extradition of fugitives from Halab in the presence of Niqmepa, an act that was witnessed by Arnuwar, *ḫalzoḡli* of Halab.²⁹ Arnuwar would have obtained this office through appointment by the king of Mittani. Subsequently, when Tudhaliya (I) was king of Hatti, a king ruled Halab again, according to the prologue of the Aleppo Treaty (KBo I 6), which says that the king of Halab first made peace with Tudhaliya (thus committing treachery against Mittani) but then turned around and made peace with the king of Hanigalbat (thus committing treachery against

26 Considering the textual evidence in conjunction with the tablets' findspot, and in light of the prevalence of collective government in the region of the middle Euphrates, Sallaberger et al. (2006, 93f.) even propose that the monumental building in which the two tablets were found served as the place of assembly for the elders of Bašīru – in effect, the senate building.

27 On the office denoted by the Hurrian term *ḫalzoḡli* (Akkadian *ḫaṣuḫlu*), formed from Akkadian *ḫaṣu* by the addition of the compound suffix *-oḡli* (> *-o-ḡ(e)-li*; Wilhelm 1992), see Márquez Rowe (1997, 193–94), who examines this term in the context of his analysis of ALT 101, discussed immediately below. Márquez Rowe observes that the Hurro-Hittite bilingual text KBo 32, 14 gives the Hittite equivalent of *ḫalzoḡli* as *auriyaš išhaš*, an official whose function was more or less that of a provincial governor, and further, that the responsibilities attested for the *ḫalzoḡli* accord with this understanding of the term, as does the fact that the *ḫalzoḡli* answered directly to the king. This is so in HSS IX 1, discussed above (p. 17), in which the king of Mittani informs the king of Arraphe that he has directed the *ḫalzoḡli* of a certain town to implement the territorial reallocation (within Arraphe) that he has ordered. The conclusion reached by Maidman (1981, 240), based on examining the attestations in the Nuzi texts, that the *ḫaṣuḫlu* was merely "a minor real estate official" represents too narrow an interpretation of the evidence.

28 For analysis of the relevant parts of the Idrimi inscription, the only source that refers (albeit obliquely) to the Mittanian takeover of Halab, see von Dassow 2008, 19, 24f. and 42–45.

29 On ALT 101, see von Dassow 2008, 56f. (with references to previous literature). Whereas my discussion there tacitly assumes that Halab had its own king during the period under discussion (when Sauštatar ruled Mittani and Niqmepa ruled Alalakh), the evidence does not really warrant that assumption. One of the tablets from Ekalte (no. 28) is dated by an apparently non-local official named Arnuwar, son of Šulīya, whom Mayer (2001, 24) suggests is the mayor (*ḫazannu*) of Emar, although the text does not indicate what office he holds. It is not inconceivable that he was the same man as Arnuwar the *ḫalzoḡli* of Halab known from ALT 101.

Hatti), wherefore Tudhaliya destroyed Halab and its king (around 1400).³⁰ Thereafter, under the rule of Artatama, Halab was again the seat of a district, *ḫaḥṣu*, not of a kingdom, as attested by the later of the two Tall Bazi tablets (see above, with n. 24).

Thus Mittani made Halab into a province, unlike other polities that it subjected, replacing the native regime with – as it seems – an administrative regime installed by the overlord. Indeed, resentment of this arrangement could account for Halab’s decision to ally with Hatti when Tudhaliya showed up. Although the construction offered here rests on scant bits of evidence that, singly or in combination, do not exclude alternative scenarios, its validity may be supported by observing the care Hatti later took, when reestablishing kingship at Halab through the Aleppo Treaty, to prevent the Hittite viceroy from getting any ideas about independent kingship. The treaty’s prologue underpins the new relationship between Hatti and Halab by reference to Hattusili I’s defeat of Halab three centuries earlier: this act is construed as the moment when Hatti ended Halab’s “great kingship”, and on that premise – ignoring Mittani’s conquest of Halab after its destruction by Mursili I – Halab is represented as “sinning” against Hattusili I, the city’s original conqueror, in any subsequent relations with Mittani (Hanigalbat). This version of history was constructed to serve the goal of ensuring that Halab, though it had a king again, would remain subordinate to Hatti.

The foregoing discussion identifies three models employed by Mittani in governing its empire, in very general terms: first, a subordinate state could be ruled by its own king, whose fealty to his sovereign rendered the relationship between polities as a relationship between two men; second, a state could be self-governed, so that the relationship was between the collective body politic and the sovereign; third, the state could be subordinated to the point of incorporation as a province, annulling its political relationship to the sovereign

30 The passage paraphrased above is KBo I 6:15–20. My understanding of the treaty prologue, and of these lines in particular, differs subtly from that of most scholars, especially on two points: a) I do not understand each successive statement to represent a chronologically successive event, rather, I understand the succession of statements in the prologue to loop back repeatedly to the “original” event whereby Hattusili removed Halab’s “great kingship” (hence the prologue offers no basis for positing a Hattusili II); b) accordingly, I do not read each statement as representing a distinct event, rather, I understand certain events to be represented by several (not necessarily contiguous) statements apiece. The passage in question tells us the following: “When Tudhaliya, great king, ascended the throne of [kingship], the king of Halab made peace with him, but then the king of Halab turned around and settled with the king of Hanigalbat. And because of this deed, he (= Tudhaliya) smote them, the king of Halab and the king of Hanigalbat, together with their lands?, and he tore down the city of Halab” (ll. 15–18). The events thus described are then summed up with the evaluative statement “The king of Halab committed a sin [against] the king of Hanigalbat” (l. 19) – by his perfidious alliance with Tudhaliya – “and against Hattusili, [king of] Hatti, he committed a sin” (l. 20) – by then returning to the Mittanian fold; for any defection of Halab from Hatti was accounted a sin against Hattusili I, the original conqueror of Halab and founder of the Hittite kingdom. A thorough study of the entire treaty prologue, and a reconstruction of the sequence of events represented in it, must await another occasion; for the nonce, see Astour’s exposition of the issue, in which he notes the text’s use of “retrospective recapitulation,” not uncommon in Hittite historical narrative (Astour 1989, 41ff., with references; meanwhile, the conventional misunderstanding of the text, complete with the phantom Hattusili II, is represented by Bryce 2005, 140f.).

by annulling its status as a polity. In a variation on the first (or perhaps the third) model, the local king might be associated with the sovereign as co-ruler of his state. In all of these models, Mittanian jurisdiction was interwoven with local jurisdiction, so that, for instance, the judicial systems of subject states and the superordinate state could cooperate in the resolution of legal disputes, and the disposition of territorial rights as well as citizenship rights (discussed in the next section) was subject to Mittanian authority.

The sporadic illumination provided by the sparse sources necessitates developing general hypotheses on the basis of as little as a single instance, which is methodologically unsatisfactory, for it forces conjecture to blend with inference. Quite aside from its partly conjectural nature, the picture drawn above is unsatisfactory in its lack of specifics. We cannot even say whether Mittani regularly required tribute from states it subjected; the two occasions of tribute payment attested at Emar may or may not represent standard requisitions. Clearly various requirements or orders were expected to be fulfilled, but it is impossible to tell whether the examples found in the extant sources – e.g., the “men going to Mittani” from the kingdom of Alalakh – represent ordinary or extraordinary activity. The sources from Arraphe attest the provisioning of Hanigalbatean military forces, Hanigalbatean officers in command of Arraphean forces, and troops from Hanigalbat operating in Arraphe, but these records all derive from the final phase of the surviving archives, the countdown to Mittani’s loss of the realm. To extrapolate normal practice over the preceding 150 years from the activities of that period would require additional evidence. As noted earlier, Egyptian sources assure us that Mittani could call upon the military resources of its empire, but it was not the task of those sources to explain how Mittani went about it.

2 Sociopolitical organization

Another way to inquire how Mittani and its constituent polities were organized is to approach the subject from the standpoint of the structure of the population, rather than the structure of government. Sources from different parts of the Mittani Empire yield the earliest direct evidence for class formation, as well as the earliest formal articulation of the concept of citizenship as the relationship of an individual to a given state. This is not to say that class differentiation and the idea of citizenship were previously nonexistent, but to highlight their explicit formulation in written records that were produced under the specific historical conditions of Mittanian rule, with a view to achieving better understanding of what those conditions were.

2.1 Citizenship

Three documents, one apiece from three different places, concern the “Hanigalbatean status”, *hanigalbatūtu* in Akkadian, of particular persons. In chronological order, these are as follows: one from Alalakh dating to the reign of Sauštatar (ALT 13, mentioned above); one from Umm el-Marra dating to the reign of Šuttarna II (UEM T1); and one from Tall Brak, within Mittani’s core territory, dating to the reign of Tušratta (TB 8001).³¹ Although, among the numerous references to Hanigalbateans in sources from Arraphe (meaning primarily the archives found at Nuzi), none specifically concerns the *status* of “Hanigalbatean”, at least two documents do concern property rights or obligations that are contingent on residence in Arraphe or in Hanigalbat; these documents are thus relevant to the issue of *hanigalbatūtu*. Despite their small number, the geographical and chronological distribution of the sources pertaining to the “status of Hanigalbatean” is such that they may be understood to attest a general feature of the imperial polity, not a phenomenon peculiar to a certain region or moment.

ALT 13 records Sauštatar’s decision of the case of one Irip-Ḫazi, who sued Niqmepa, king of Alalakh, claiming that he had Hanigalbatean status. His claim was denied, with the result that he had to return to the service of Niqmepa; that is, he was determined to be properly a subject of Alalakh and not of Hanigalbat. UEM T1 records the elevation to Hanigalbatean status of a woman, her children, and a man, a change of status effected in the presence of Šuttarna by one Gubi, whose dependents or adoptees the beneficiaries evidently were (unfortunately the relationships linking the parties are unspecified); Gubi bequeaths part of his property to the man who is elevated to *hanigalbatūtu* (while also bequeathing personnel to another man, relationship unspecified). TB 8001 similarly records one Yabbi’s elevation of his concubine’s son to Hanigalbatean status, concomitant with his bequest of property to that son, in the presence of Tušratta. In the case of both the Umm el-Marra and Tall Brak documents, the change of status is conjoined with the grant of family property: that is, the underlying transaction is the beneficiary’s change of status from dependent, without property rights, to heir, with property rights.³² The benefactor could have accomplished this kind of transaction without involving the local authorities, much less going before the king of Mittani, but for the fact that the status to be conferred on his dependent(s) is that of “Hanigalbatean”. For the beneficiaries to obtain this status, their benefactor must

31 On all three documents, see von Dassow 2008, 49–51. For the edition of the Umm el-Marra tablet, with discussion of its archaeological context, sealing, and paleography as well as its textual content, see Cooper et al. 2005. TB 8001, originally published by Illingworth 1988, no. 23, with Pl. 9, is republished in Oates et al. 1997, 41, with Fig. 62. In the commentary accompanying his new edition of ALT 13, Niedorf also discusses the other two texts that feature the term *hanigalbatūtu* (Niedorf 2008, 241–243).

32 Contra Cooper et al. 2005, 48–51, the assumption that the beneficiary must have been enslaved prior to the benefactor’s act is not logically (or legally) compulsory. Cf. also Giorgieri 2005, 81–82.

himself have had it, but he could not bestow it on a dependent other than his natural heirs without obtaining the king's assent.

In all three instances, the issue before the king was citizenship of Hanigalbat as distinct from either citizenship in a subordinate polity or lack of citizen status.³³ In the case of Irip-Ḫazi, the king determined that he was not a citizen of Hanigalbat but of Alalakh; the denial of his claim of *ḥanigalbatūtu* meant that he was obliged to do labor and military service for the kingdom of Alalakh.³⁴ In the case of Gubi's and Yabbi's adopted heirs, the king's consent to their acquisition of *ḥanigalbatūtu* meant that they would owe service to the kingdom of Hanigalbat and no other. Thus, whichever local polity's territory Umm el-Marra belonged to at the time, as "Hanigalbateans" Gubi's heirs would owe that polity no service. Instead, presumably Gubi's heirs could be levied for service to Hanigalbat, as could Yabbi's heirs, dwelling within Hanigalbat at Tall Brak. This concept of service being exclusive to the state of one's citizenship is borne out by the evidence of the census records and troop rosters from Alalakh: among the thousands of men enrolled on the extant tablets, dozens or perhaps hundreds are identified as natives of lands outside Alalakh's realm, but none is identified as a Hanigalbatean.³⁵

Meanwhile, citizenship entailed rights as well as duties: the Hanigalbatean citizenship that Irip-Ḫazi claimed, and that Gubi's and Yabbi's dependents acquired, meant that one enjoyed the legal protection of Hanigalbat.³⁶ In the case of dependents adopted as heirs, elevation to *ḥanigalbatūtu* was necessarily accompanied by a bequest of family property, inasmuch as citizenship and the concomitant obligation to serve the state were contingent on having rights to property within the domain subject to that state.

It is this aspect that seems to be reflected, albeit obliquely, in two legal documents from Nuzi, JEN 328 and HSS XIX, 7. JEN 328 records the outcome of a legal process initiated by two sons of Tehip-tilla against one Šupa-hali, whose father, Arya, had sold his field to Tehip-tilla, and who has not cultivated it. Šupa-hali, who has evidently been summoned from Hanigalbat, where he now resides, makes a declaration to the effect that the claimants shall

33 The distinction at issue is not between Hanigalbatean status and slavery; these were not the only two possible positions that a person within the Mittani Empire could occupy. The *wardūtu* to which Irip-Ḫazi must return in ALT 13 is subject-hood, not servitude.

34 The census records and troop rosters from Alalakh may show that he was then called up for such service; see von Dassow 2008, 363. Whether or not it is the same Irip-Ḫazi who appears in the census records, no doubt it was to avoid service that the Irip-Ḫazi who lost his case in ALT 13 went before Sauštatar with his claim of *ḥanigalbatūtu*.

35 One man, however, a member of the *ḥaniaḥḥe* class, is identified as originating from Mittani (ALT 135: 10–12). Men of foreign origin are found principally, but not exclusively, among the *ḥabiru* troops of Alalakh, which stands to reason given the nature of the social category designated *ḥabiru*; see von Dassow 2008, 105–111 (on *ḥabirū* in general), and 201–215 and 344–348 (on the *ḥabirū* of Alalakh).

36 On citizenship as the status of the legally free subject of a ruler see Westbrook 2003, 36–38 (with reference to *ḥanigalbatūtu*). Westbrook's definition has to be extended to encompass citizenship of states that were not constituted as monarchies, like the polity of Bašīru (discussed above).

take the field.³⁷ In confirming Tehip-tilla's sons' title to the field, the judges state that because Šupa-hali does not reside in the land of Arraphe, they have not required him to pay the *išpiku* (penalty for the yield) of the field. The logic appears to be that because Šupa-hali has both lost rights to property in Arraphe (through his father's alienation of the field) and changed his place of residence to Hanigalbat, he no longer owes any duty on his family's former property in Arraphe. By forfeiting property, residence, and duties in Arraphe and moving to Hanigalbat, though he has not thereby become a "Hanigalbatean", he has effectively ceased to be a citizen of Arraphe. The converse situation is perhaps in evidence in HSS 19, 7, the testament of Ilaya, son of Hapira, a Hanigalbatean residing in Arraphe where he commanded military forces.³⁸ After a series of stipulations on behalf of his wife, two sons, and a daughter, Ilaya declares that his two other sons, Zike and Tamartae, "live in another land" and shall have no right to any of his property; the property of Ilaya is, implicitly, located in Arraphe, and the land in which the excluded sons live is likely Hanigalbat.³⁹ If so, while their family has changed residence and acquired property rights in Arraphe, Zike and Tamartae have remained citizens of Hanigalbat, wherefore they forgo sharing rights to the family's Arraphean property. Ilaya need not have lost the status of Hanigalbatean upon taking up residence and serving as an officer in Arraphe, but the sons who did not join him there were excluded from acquiring citizenship in Arraphe.

In the foregoing discussion, I read the sources to indicate a conceptualization of citizenship as an exclusive bond between the individual and the state, a relationship in which duties were conjoined with rights to property within the state, and one that was normally grounded in residence within the state's territory.⁴⁰ This conceptualization was not new in the time of the Mittani Empire. The innovation, if it was indeed such, was to add a dimension to citizenship in the superordinate polity, Hanigalbat, now that it ruled a number of subordinate polities of differing structure across a broad territory. Citizenship in any of the subordinate polities remained exclusive and correlated with residence: one could not be a citizen of, for example, both Arraphe and Kizzuwatna, and one's duty to one state or the other depended on which state one's home town was part of.⁴¹ Citizenship in the superordinate polity, on the other hand, could be held by persons residing anywhere in the empire, from Arraphe to Alalakh, but they still owed service only to Hanigalbat. Because *hanigalbat*

37 The laconic rendition of Šupa-hali's statement in ll. 13–16 is not wholly unambiguous, but he begins by noting that he resides in Hanigalbat and concludes by saying "they shall take" the field (reading *i-le-qú-š[u-mi]* at the end of l. 16 *bis*; cf. Zaccagnini 1979, 9, with n. 31).

38 See Zaccagnini 1979, 11f., 20.

39 As suggested by Zaccagnini 1979, 12, whose puzzlement at Zike and Tamartae's exclusion from inheritance might be resolved by the interpretation offered here.

40 So in the case of territorial states; the terms need some adjustment to suit polities constituted of mobile populations.

41 This is illustrated by ALT 14, the record of Sauštatar's decision of the dispute between Alalakh and Kizzuwatna over the town of Alawari. The king of Mittani decided in Alalakh's favor, and Alawari was subject to conscription and other imposts by Alalakh (see von Dassow 2008, 48f., 51, and 362f., with cross-references there).

tūtu was geographically extensible, yet it carried exemption from service to subordinate polities, acquisition of this status was regulated by the Mittanian king.

Probably citizenship of Hanigalbat was more desirable than citizenship in one of the subject kingdoms. But it was apparently not exemption from military service that made it so. Hanigalbateans like Ilaya, son of Hapira (mentioned above), did a lot of the fighting in Arraphe when it became necessary to defend that kingdom – in the end unsuccessfully – against Assyrian attack.⁴² Although the evidence pertaining to that particular historical moment cannot be extrapolated to the Mittani Empire in general, if it is at all representative, apparently the people who enjoyed Hanigalbatean citizenship did not fail to pull their own and their kingdom's weight.

2.2 Class formation

The explicit systems of social classes that are documented in kingdoms subject to Mittani owe their creation and implementation to deliberate Mittanian policy, rather than representing the outcome of an organic development. I have argued for this proposition in my study of the social class system attested in 15th-century Alalakh, comparing it to that attested in 14th-century Arraphe; here I review the evidence and the argument.⁴³

The archives of both Alalakh and Arraphe contain administrative records that categorize citizens of the realm according to four distinct classes. Each of the classes can be found in name or in substance elsewhere, both within and outside the Mittani Empire, but similar records documenting a quadripartite division of classes have not so far been found anywhere else. Although two instances of a phenomenon constitute a slender basis for positing a general rule, it cannot be the result of coincidence that Alalakh and Arraphe, lying on opposite sides of the empire, possessed class systems that were essentially identical in structure. The classes they distinguished are as follows:

- The main body of the free population comprised citizens who possessed rights to property and owed the corresponding duties of military and labor service. The general term for the service obligation was *ilku*, and accordingly this class was denoted *ālik ilki*, “doers of *ilku*-service”, in Arraphe. In Alalakh, the same class was denoted by the Hurrian equivalent of *ālik ilki*, to wit, *unuššogli*, formed of *unušše* (= *ilku*) with the composite oc-

42 Hanigalbatean involvement in the defense of Arraphe is discussed in some detail by Zaccagnini 1979, esp. 20–25; see now Maidman 2010, 15–19. While Zaccagnini and others have understood the sources to indicate that Arraphe also came under Babylonian attack, Maidman finds that the evidence fails to support that interpretation.

43 At the conclusion of my study of the social classes of Alalakh and their historical development, I compare the Alalakhian and Arraphean systems of classes and set forth the hypothesis that these systems were created at the instance of the Mittanian ruling authority (von Dassow 2008, 351–361). The evidence from Arraphe derives primarily from a set of military census records found at Kirkuk (supplemented by a few records from Nuzi), on which see von Dassow 2009.

cupational suffix *-oġli*, thus “*unušše*-service-man”. The usual term for this class, however, at Alalakh and elsewhere, was the common Semitic word *ḥupšu*, for which the Alalakh texts also employ an Akkadian synonym, *šābū namê* (“people of the countryside”, “peasant”). When they were levied for war, members of this class fought as foot soldiers.

- Elevated above the general body of the citizenry was the nobility, who had the privilege of fighting from horse-drawn chariots rather than on foot. In most parts of the Mittani Empire, the nobility were dignified with a special designation, *maryanni*, which was formed by adding the Hurrian derivational suffix *-nni* to the borrowed Indo-Aryan word *márya*, “(young) man”. In Arraphe, the same class was instead denoted by the Akkadian designation *rākib narkabti*, “chariot rider”. It bears emphasizing that the term *maryanni* has nothing to do with chariotry; etymologically, the word simply means “man”, although as a modified loanword it was semantically transparent to no one. As such, *maryanni* was used to denote a special class of man, the nobility. Because the most distinctive feature of this class was the use of chariots in war, the term for it eventually acquired the connotation “chariot warrior”, as its use spread beyond Mittani. Besides having the privilege of fighting in the chariotry, members of the noble class were exempt from labor service, and some evidence may indicate that they also enjoyed immunity from distraint for debt. The entry of new members into this class was accordingly regulated by local rulers,⁴⁴ in the same way as the acquisition of Hanigalbatean citizenship was regulated by the Mittanian ruler.
- At the lower end of the social scale, a class of impoverished citizens was differentiated from the main body of the service-owing, property-holding citizenry. In Arraphe, this class was denoted by the term *aššābu*, “tenant”, while in Alalakh it was denoted by various designations meaning “poor” (*ḥaniaḥḥe*, a Hurrianized West Semitic word, and its Akkadian synonyms *ekû* and *muškēnu*). The criterion for membership in this class appears to have been loss of rights to property in land, a circumstance that the state could reverse, as it may have done for “poor” citizens who continued to perform their service obligations. That members of the “poor” or “tenant” class did military service is evident from the records of both Arraphe and Alalakh. Therefore, the fact that they were categorically distinguished from the class denoted *unuššoġli* or *ālik ilki* apparently does not indicate that they were exempt from *ilku* or *unušše*.
- A fourth class was also differentiated from the rest, one that comprised occupational specialists and persons in the employ of the palace, temple, or high-ranking individuals. In Arraphe this class was denoted by the Hurrian term *nakkošše*, from the root *nakk-*, “release”; in Alalakh it was denoted by Hurrian *eġelli*, from *ehl-*, “save”, or by its Akkadian equivalent *šūzubu*, “saved, rescued”. The terminology suggests that this

⁴⁴ At Alalakh, this is attested by ALT 15, which records a royal grant of *maryanni* status, and ALT 91, which establishes the *maryanni* status of a woman and her offspring (see von Dassow 2008, 272–279); no comparable document is known from Arraphe.

class may originally have been formed of persons who were “saved” or “released” from debt servitude by a redeemer who thereby became their patron or employer.⁴⁵ If members of this class were beneficiaries of redemption, they did not, however, remain in servitude to their creditor, for they were subject to military conscription as free men. The denotations “released”, “rescued” might also refer to the exemption of this class from labor service; its members appear to have been levied to contribute specialized labor (e.g., carpentry, metallurgy, training horses, or driving chariots) instead. Since the labor of debtors who practiced specialized trades would have had high value, and since the state had an interest both in requisitioning specialized labor and in maximizing the body of citizens subject to conscription, it is reasonable to suppose that the state used redemption from debt as an instrument for creating a class of occupational specialists. If this was the mechanism through which the class was initially created, however, it would appear to have accrued additional members not only through further redemptions, but through selecting persons having desired skills from the main body of the citizenry and the “poor” class, and reclassifying them into the “saved” class, which carried the benefit of release from regular labor service.⁴⁶ By either means, the development of a distinct class of occupational specialists transpired at the state’s initiative and under its ongoing regulation.

The foregoing description brings out the role of the state in defining these classes and their membership. The evidence from Alalakh indicates, furthermore, that the *maryanni* class of that kingdom was created during the course of Niqmepa’s reign, by selecting the sons of noble families to constitute the new class.⁴⁷ The records we have do not attest a fixed structure that was simply imprinted on clay through the styli of the scribes who wrote them, but

45 I rejected this idea in my book (von Dassow 2008, 99, with cross-references), where I argued in essence that the *ēgelli* class was constituted by selecting persons on the basis of their trades, or their employment in the service of institutions or high-ranking individuals, and exempting them from regular labor service in order to obtain their specialized services. However, I am now persuaded by Márquez Rowe’s argument that redemption from debt was a primary mechanism for creating this class (Rowe 2002, esp. 13–16), excepting his infelicitous expression of the relationship of patron to client, or employer to employee, as “ownership”. My counter-arguments against the hypothesis that in the kingdom of Alalakh the entire *ghelli* class was constituted of persons redeemed from antichretic servitude remain valid. However, considering the terminology, the social realities that are its likely referents, and the general characteristics of the *ghelli* class, it appears that a combination of his hypothesis and mine would best account for the totality of the evidence available.

In this context, it may bear repeating that the fact that some members of classes other than *ghelli* (or *nakkošše*) are attested holding occupations, or being employed in the service of an institution or individual, does not invalidate the statement that the *ghelli* class, in aggregate, is distinguished by these characteristics (von Dassow 2008, 264, with n. 31, and 315).

46 This proposition is supported by the evidence that the *ghelli* class doubled in size, as a percentage of the population subject to census, during the course of Niqmepa’s reign at Alalakh (von Dassow 2008, 318). No diachronic evidence is available for the size of the *nakkošše* class in the kingdom of Arraphe, where we only have a snapshot of the quantitative relationship among the classes from the last phase of Mittanian rule.

47 See von Dassow 2008, 269.

rather a process of class formation that was directed by the administration employing those scribes. Indeed, the scribes who conducted the census, enrolled men for service, or recorded their lands were enacting the state's role in organizing its citizenry into classes.

It is in that process and the mechanisms of its implementation, rather than in the occasional borrowed term (such as *maryanni*), that Mittani's hand is evident. If my interpretation of the material from Alalakh and Arraphe is right, instances of a comparable quadripartite class structure should be found in other polities subject to Mittani, if ever their archives are found and comparable types of records are preserved therein.

This paper represents an effort to work backward from observable phenomena to posit the invisible processes and structures that generated them. It is not a matter of stitching together bits of information extracted from the sources, and filling in the gaps; in the case of Mittani the sources remain too scant to apply such a procedure anyway, as is nowhere more obvious than in the ongoing uncertainty over the kingdom's chronology prior to the Amarna period. But the methods of inference implemented here should, if rightly employed, produce valid results regardless of whether the sources are many or few. And if so, perhaps some aspects of the structure of the Mittani Empire, and its relations with the polities and populations under its sway, have come into view.

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The Organisation of Residential Space in the Mittani Kingdom as a Mirror of Different Models of Governance

Analysing domestic space and the organisation of residential space is not as simple as it might appear. Few settlements have been excavated on a sufficiently large scale, and even fewer contain buildings in which enough material has been preserved to reconstruct their use. Most were abandoned and their contents removed and therefore do not allow archaeologists to elucidate the principles of their spatial organisation. But even when there is sufficient evidence, we face the main problem concerning the interpretation of space: what can the outer forms and the inventories of any buildings tell us about past processes, behaviours, and norms? Can domestic space contribute real insights into past polities?

1 The evidence of domestic space concerning past polities

Although it is widely accepted that palaces and other official buildings possibly provide some information concerning the extant political systems, the evidence of private dwellings in this respect is much debated.¹ Houses are evidently linked to social structures; but do they also reflect social systems and polities and their transformations? Certainly, the form, size, layout, and equipment of houses differ distinctly over region and time. But how can we determine which factors were responsible for the differences? Is a large house with many rooms related to financial (e.g. a rich owner), social (e.g. a large family), or socio-political (e.g. high status occupants) factors, or were technical or environmental (availability of space, material and manpower), climatic (adaptation of the architecture to the climate), economic (use for manufacture or trade in addition to domestic residential use) factors at play, or were such features determined by cultural conventions (such as ethnic or regional customs), or by symbolic conceptions (i.e. the perception of an ideal house)?²

The idea that the plan, layout, and size of a house are directly linked with its use and that these features thus inform us about its inhabitants is widespread. But the amount of information that can be recovered from an examination of only the structure itself is limited, and consequently functional analyses based on the contents of the houses are also needed. This kind of analysis is painstaking, but much more reliable. D.J.W. Meijer de-

* Johannes-Gutenberg-Universität Mainz.

1 Kent 1990.

2 Sanders 1990; Otto 1996a, 29.

scribed why it is necessary: “The superficiality of form as a tool for analytical classification is obvious, and knowledge of function is indispensable. The latter must be obtained through careful description and analysis of all contents of all rooms.”³

Certainly the form and the function of a house are correlated. But in order to understand them properly, the underlying determining factors have to be recognised first. With the help of earlier considerations by Rapoport, Sanders and others,⁴ T. McClellan⁵ proposed that the following determining factors could account for the variations in form and size of Late Bronze Age houses within the investigated region:⁶ 1. historical processes and origins; 2. physical environment; 3. economic factors; 4. regional polities; 5. variations in household composition and size; 6. ideology.

We shall see in the following to what extent these factors can be recognised and how often “one dominant explanation cannot be singled out to the exclusion of others.”⁷ The central issue is the precise study of assemblages in order to reconstruct activity zones that can be used in a subsequent spatial analysis. However, every ancient assemblage has suffered more or less dramatically from decay and destruction resulting from historical events and physical processes. Thus the inventory recovered by excavation, the archaeological inventory, is only a part of the original contents of the building, the systemic inventory.⁸ The missing parts, such as valuable goods that were removed by the inhabitants or by looters, and perishable goods such as textiles and other organic materials, have to be deduced with the help of ethnographic analogies and ancient texts from the same period and region.

In order to acquire information from the assemblages about the activities that took place, the people involved in them and the polities they lived in, we depend very much on our knowledge of daily life and society. Luckily, several corpora of cuneiform documents from the same time and region are available (especially sale or inheritance documents) which inform us about daily life and social structures. In the Middle Euphrates area larger groups of tablets come from Meskene / ancient Emar and Tall Munbaqa / ancient Ekalte, and small groups from Tall Hadidi / ancient Azu, Tall Fray, and Tall Bazi / probably ancient Bašīru.⁹

In this article, the wider framework of the investigated domestic dwellings will be examined first, then the organisation of residential space will be discussed with the help of selected examples, and finally it will be considered whether domestic space can contribute to the main topic of the workshop, the nature of the transition from the Middle Bronze to the Mittani period.

3 Meijer 1989, 233.

4 Rapoport 1983; Sanders 1990.

5 McClellan 1997, 36–46.

6 See Otto 2006a, Chap. 3.

7 McClellan 1997, 47.

8 Clarke 1973; Pfälzner 2001, 47; Otto 2006a, 24–26.

9 Arnaud 1985–7, 1991; Mayer 2001; Dornemann 1980, 218–220; Sallaberger et al. 2006.

2 The frame of domestic space: different models of governance in the Mittani kingdom

As Eva von Dassow points out (this volume, p. 11–32), there were several different systems of government within the Mittani empire. One of them is the palace-based society, which is well attested at Alalakh and Ugarit to the West, where the local kings were placed under the overlordship of the rulers of Mittani. The same system was obtained at the eastern edge of the empire, where the realm of Arraphe was ruled by its own king under the overlordship of Mittani. At the same time, there were collectively governed settlements in the Euphrates valley. In a workshop on “Collective Governance and the Role of the Palace” at the RAI Würzburg 2008, the peculiar structure of the settlements in the area of the Upper Syrian Euphrates was discussed. The elders, the city and the god of the city were particularly strong in this area.¹⁰ Further elements of these corporate structures are the so-called “brothers”, who were responsible for settling private legal affairs.¹¹ Apparently the Mittani king agreed to exercise hegemony over local monarchs as well as collective-governance polities, accepting the extant social structures.

This raises the question of whether the different models of governance within the Mittani kingdom were reflected in the organisation of the settlements? Let us investigate this with the help of selected examples from the western part of the Mittani kingdom (Tall Atchana/Alalakh and Ugarit), the eastern part (Nuzi) and the centre (Emar, Tall Munbaqa/Ek-alte and Tall Bazi in the Euphrates region). These sites are chosen because they have been excavated on a sufficiently large scale to provide an image of the organisation of the settlement. Conversely other contemporary sites, such as Tall Sianu, Tall Kazel, Tall Afis, Tall Tweini to the West, and Tall Braq, Tall Fakhariya and Tall al-Hamidiya in the centre, are not taken into consideration here.

The level IV occupation at Tall Atchana/Alalakh in the ‘Amq plain has been revealed partly by the old excavations of L. Woolley.¹² The excavated part of the settlement at that time (ca. 1450–1350 BC) showed a dominant official complex made up by the palace and an adjacent building, a quite modest temple and several houses (Fig. 1). The domestic quarters were quite extensive, as is shown by the recent excavations and magnetic surveys by A. Yener.¹³ The structure is comparable to that of Ugarit, although the last and best known phase of Ugarit dates from the very end of the Late Bronze Age, the 13th century. However, until more information about the settlement and the domestic structures of Alalakh is published, the house quarters of Ugarit will have to remain the reference point for LBA domestic architecture in the coastal region. This is partly justified by the fact that many Ugarit

¹⁰ See Faist 2012; Otto 2012. This is documented for example in real estate transactions at Emar, where the elders and the city god are the sellers in a third of the documented transactions without ever being attested as purchasers. In contrast, the kings of Emar buy and sell like the other citizens; Beckman 1997.

¹¹ See Demare-Lafont 2012.

¹² Woolley 1955.

¹³ Yener 2005, 99–169; www.alalakh.org.

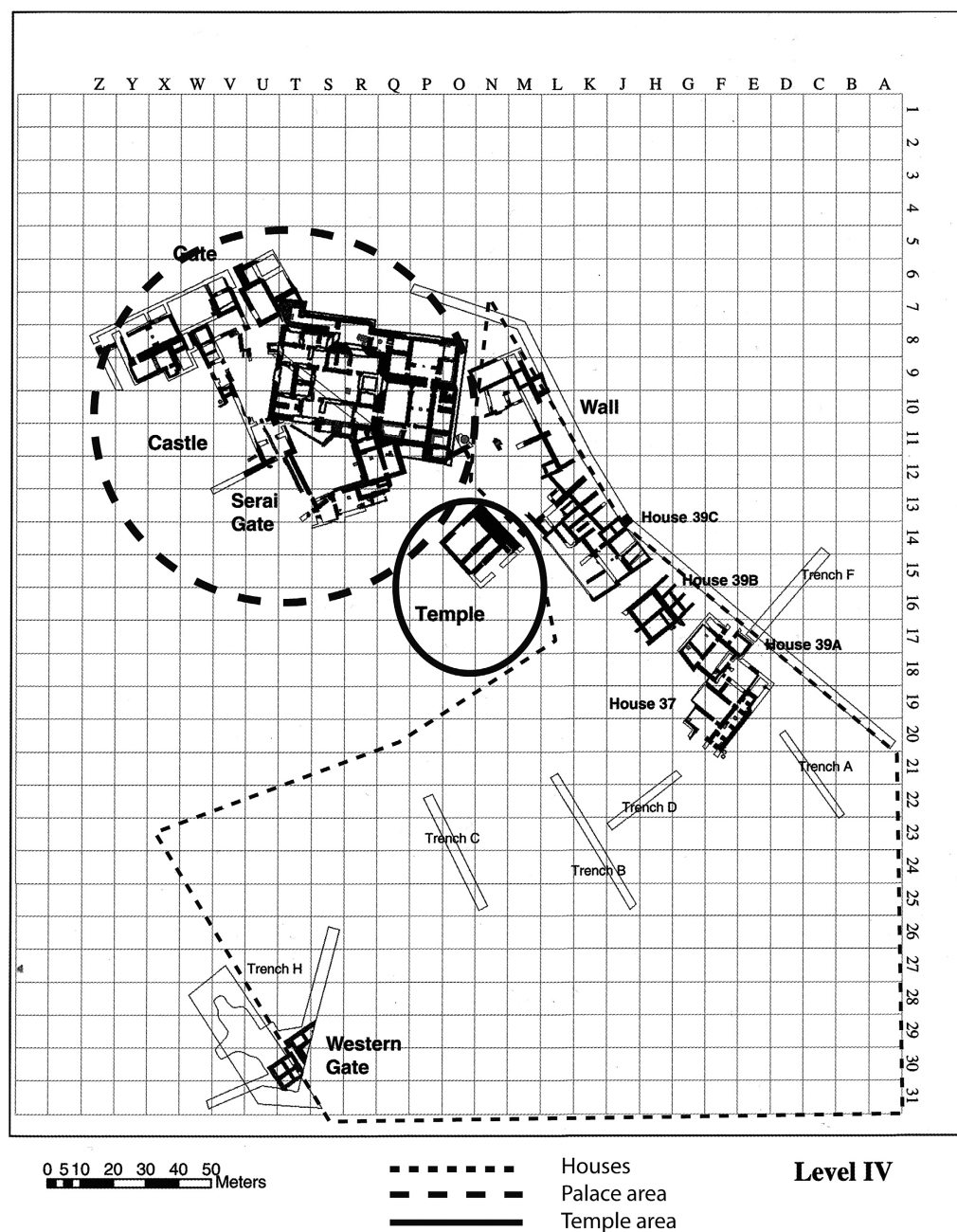


Fig. 1 | Urban structures of Tall Atchana – Alalakh level IV (15/14 cent. BC): Domestic quarters are extended south of the palace and temple area (after Yener 2005, Fig. 4.30).

houses had been in use for a long time and certainly were erected during or even prior to the Mittani occupation period.

The city of Ugarit, a 26.4 ha site, is occupied by the large royal palace and several smaller residential buildings near the western entrance, while the remaining urban area is densely occupied by houses arranged in quarters and two temples of modest size.¹⁴ The monumental complex of the royal palace and the other associated residences, which were 20–100 times larger than the adjacent houses, occupy the upper part of the site. The royal palace is a highly complex system, which served the residential and administrative purposes of the court and its various collaborators and servants, while also being used for production, storage and distribution, and for cultic activities.

At Nuzi (Fig. 2) a large, multi-room palace lies adjacent to a walled temple area and is surrounded by a dense tissue of small to medium-sized houses and larger residences.¹⁵ The residence of Prince Shilwa-teshshup¹⁶ resembles the palace in its layout, the thickness of the walls and the size of several rooms, but is of more modest size. It measured 1200 sqm, while the palace covered more than 8000 sqm.¹⁷ The diversity of the house sizes and the different dimensions of the palace, the residence of Shilwa-teshshup and the other houses resemble the situation at Ugarit and point to a highly stratified society.

Temples and domestic quarters formed the two elements of several Late Bronze Age settlements in the Upper Syrian Euphrates Region. Excavations at these sites have yet to uncover a building that differs significantly from the normal houses or temples and could be interpreted as a palace or major residence. Of course, most of the settlements have been investigated on a limited scale only, so that this absence might be due to the fact that the relevant area has just not been excavated. This could be the case, for example, at Meskene, ancient Emar, where the excavations of J. Margueron and U. Finkbeiner brought to light several parts of domestic quarters and three temples.¹⁸ The twin sanctuary is situated in Chantier E, at the most prominent point of the city; Temple M2 lies in the lower town.¹⁹ The building which Margueron uncovered at the northern edge and interpreted as the palace of the local king with a '*bīt hilāni*'-structure²⁰ is evidently a domestic unit.²¹ But in fact the sur-

¹⁴ Galliano – Calvet 2004, 28f.

¹⁵ Starr 1937/39; Stein 1998–2001.

¹⁶ Starr 1937, plan no. 34.

¹⁷ Stein 1993.

¹⁸ Excavations from 1972–1976 by a French team under the direction of Jean Margueron, and since 1996 by a German team directed by Uwe Finkbeiner.

¹⁹ Beyer 1982; Finkbeiner 2003; Faist – Finkbeiner 2002. The so-called 'temple du devin' is evidently the house of the diviner. Its form and installations, including the altar, correspond to standard Bazi houses. The excavation reports (Margueron 1975, 65–66, fig. 4, pl. VI-4) do not corroborate the reconstruction of a central doorway to the main room.

²⁰ Margueron 1979.

²¹ This interpretation as a palace has been rejected by philologists, because the archives are of a private, and not a royal character; Dietrich 1990; Sallaberger 2003. McClellan (1997) convincingly demonstrated that the ground plan of Margueron's '*bīt hilāni*' is not different from those of normal houses, although many houses at Emar were considerably smaller. A further argument against its identification as a palace is House 14 in the Weststadt of Bazi,

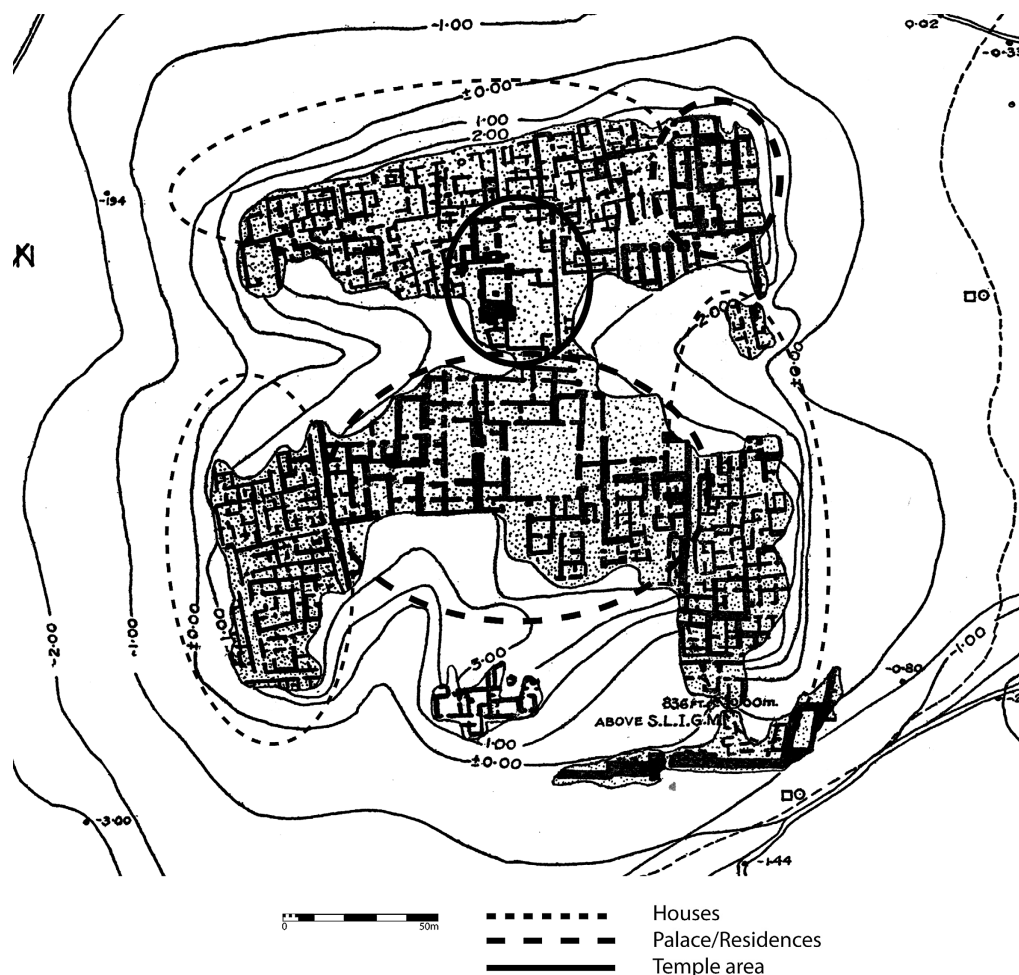


Fig. 2 | Urban structures of Yorgan Tepe – Nuzi (15/14 cent. BC): Domestic quarters and large residences are arranged around the royal palace and the temple area (after Starr 1937, Plan No. 2).

face of the walled city of Emar was much larger than the parts excavated, and a considerable part of Emar will never be excavated because it is flooded by Lake Assad. Therefore it can be argued that the palace just has not been found.

There is, however, one site which has been investigated on a large scale: Tall Munbaqa, ancient Yakaltum (MBA) or Ekalte (LBA). When the excavated area and the area investi-

which is not only similar in plan, but also larger (201 sqm; the building in Chantier A has an area of 144 sqm). House 14 was one of the three largest houses in the Weststadt and may have been the residence of a rather wealthy family, but not necessarily of a ruling monarch (Otto 2006a, 168–171).

gated by geophysical surveys are taken together, almost the complete LBA settlement has been traced²² (Fig. 3). Three temples occupied the most prominent, elevated point of the city bordering the Euphrates, while a fourth temple was situated near one of the city gates.²³ The remaining area inside the city wall was densely covered by housing quarters. The houses, arranged along planned circulation ways, show a fairly homogenous layout and function.²⁴

The texts from Ekalte show that the mayor (*hazannu*) and the Elders collectively governed the city, and that there was a king. W. Mayer interprets the two kings mentioned in the texts, named Addu-kabar and Yahsi-Ba'la with his son Zu-Ba'la, as kings of Emar, and supposes that Ekalte was dependent on the authorities in Emar.²⁵ However, the kings mentioned in Ekalte could not have been predecessors of the attested Emar kings for several historical reasons. An additional archaeological argument is that the sealings on the tablets from Emar and Ekalte are clearly contemporary.²⁶ A further argument is the mention of the palace in one text from Munbaqa (no. 62), which documents a property transaction by the city and the god (1000 shekels of silver should be paid to Ekalte's city god Ba'alaka and to the palace as a penalty).²⁷ A seal, which is identified on another tablet as the "seal of Yahsi-Ba'la, the king", is impressed on the same tablet.²⁸ It was a fairly small seal with a simple seal design, common for private seals, it bears no inscription and was apparently not fitted with metal caps, and therefore lacks the characteristics of a royal seal. There is therefore strong evidence that there was a king and even a palace at Ekalte that operated in parallel to the powerful collective structures.

In my opinion, there is no space for a palace within the whole area of Ekalte (see Fig. 3), unless this palace was not much larger than a house. If we take into consideration the fact that the king's role seems to have been not much more than that of a *primus inter pares*, we may suppose that the king of Ekalte possibly resided in one of the houses, and that his house differed from other houses – if at all – only slightly in its size or in the quality of its furnishings.

Could a similar situation have existed in Emar? Several texts from Emar testify that a king and a palace existed there from at least the 14th century onwards, that is, before the Hittite presence (contrary to Adamthwaite's suggestion that the palace at Emar was first estab-

22 See map in Werner 1998, cover inside, and Becker et al. 1994, Beilage.

23 Blocher et al. 2007.

24 Machule 1995, 418f.; Werner 1998.

25 Mayer 2001, 14; similarly: Pruzsinszky 2004. This view has not been generally accepted, Werner 2004, 21–24.

26 U. Seidl (Seidl 2004) showed that a large part of the Syrian type of Emar tablets is contemporary with or even earlier than the Ekalte sealings.

27 Mayer 2001, 128f.; M. Yamada in N.A.B.U. 1994/1,1 and Beckman 2008, 218 rightly doubts Mayer's interpretation of a scribe who mistakenly wrote É.GAL instead of Ekalte.

28 Werner 2004, 21f.

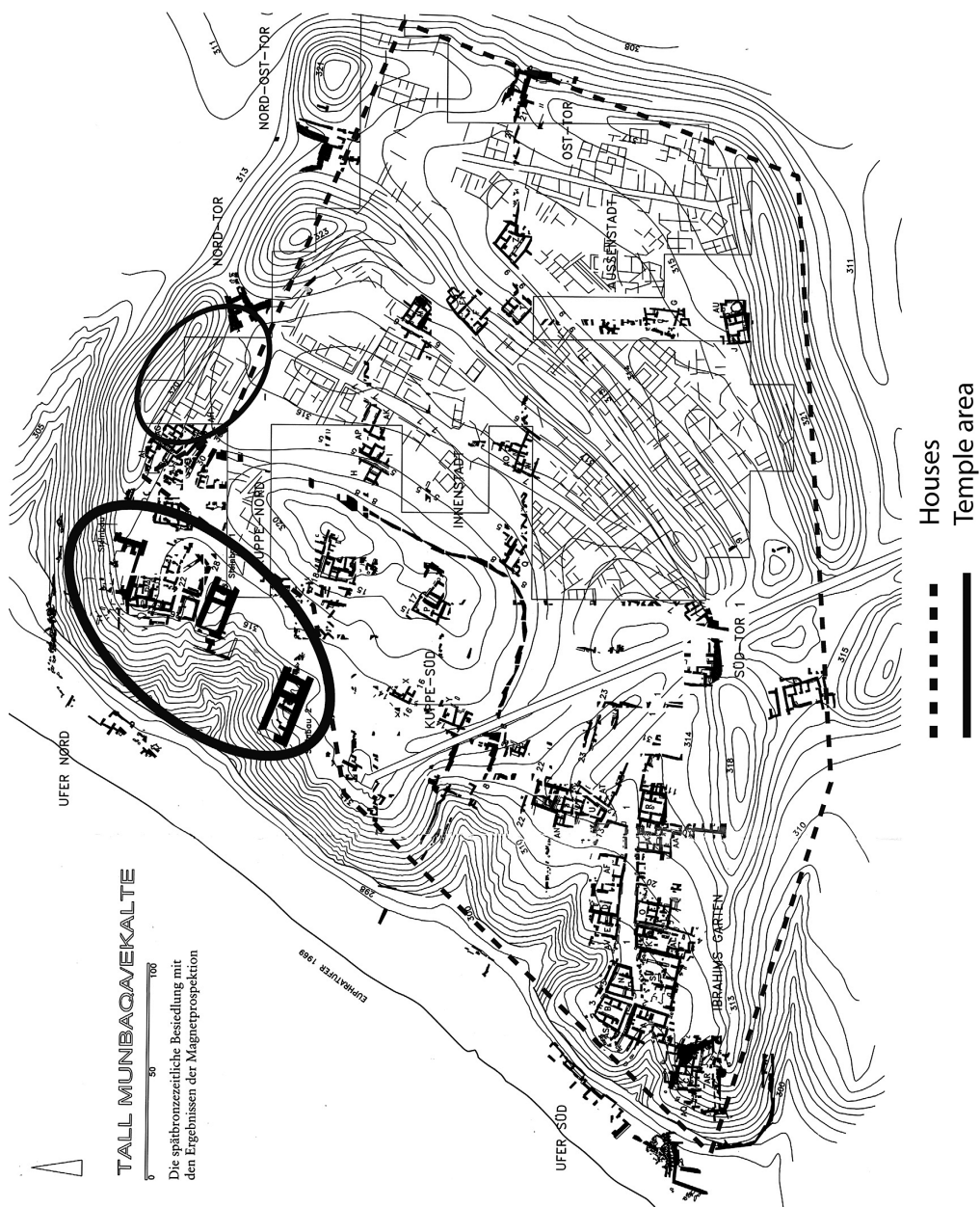


Fig. 3 | Urban structures of Tall Munbaqa / Ekalte (15/14 cent. BC): Except 3 temples at the most prominent point and one close to the NE gate, the city is covered by living quarters (after Werner 1998, cover inside).

lished during the Hittite occupation).²⁹ D. Fleming in 1994 described the “limited kingship” of the king of Late Bronze Age Emar, who did not play a prominent role either in property transactions or in rituals. In his paper at the RAI in Würzburg³⁰ he concluded that the king at Emar was “of considerable wealth and power” mainly because of his enormous contributions to the *zuku* festival. Nevertheless, he calls the king of Emar “no more than the head of the town’s leading family”. It cannot be excluded that there existed a palace at Emar in the lower town, which was covered by the medieval city of Balis and is now submerged, but the case of Munbaqa could also suggest that the palace was literally no more than a large house, i.e. possibly one of the largest houses of the settlements in question.

The considerable economic and political role of towns like Emar and Ekalte and the existence of a king and a palace argue against the explanation that collective governance was mainly restricted to less powerful or dependent settlements. At the same time, the single attestation for a palace and the paucity of references to a king at Ekalte suggest that other nearby sites also may have had kings, even if they are not mentioned in the few written documents we have.

At Tall Bazi, probably called Bašīru during the Late Bronze Age, the citadel housed a large temple and the lower town consisted of several quarters containing similar domestic dwellings. With the help of large-scale excavations and geophysical surveys considerable parts of the city were revealed, but only domestic, industrial and cultic buildings have been discovered.³¹ Indeed the two tablets discovered do not suggest that there existed a king at Bazi in the Mittani period, because the Mittanian kings Saushtatar and Artatama made grants to the “Sons of Bašīru”, i.e. the elders in the Mittanian king’s view.³²

In my opinion this shows that collective governance was not mainly restricted to the lower levels of the political hierarchy in the sense of Liverani,³³ who attributes collective traditions in Late Bronze Age Syria mainly to the rural communities within a powerful kingdom. The settlements in the Euphrates area were economically strong and politically stable communities. Indeed they were subject to an external political power – during the Late Bronze Age first the Mittani and later the Hittite king – but the same is true for the other, more stratified societies within the Mittani kingdom.

29 Adamthwaite 2001, 201–203. The existence of a palace and a king at Emar at the time of Idrimi has often been denied because he fled from Alalakh to the elders of Emar.

30 Fleming 2012.

31 Otto 2006a; Einwag – Otto 2006; Otto – Einwag 2007.

32 Sallaberger et al. 2006.

33 Liverani 1975.

3 The use of domestic space at different sites within the Mittani kingdom: Ugarit, Nuzi and Tall Bazi

The evidence presented above suggests that the form, size and use of the houses could have been quite different within the various regions of the extensive Mittani kingdom. Are the differences simply due to the fact that the more complex a society, the greater the functional differentiation within settlements, houses and rooms, as has been proposed by Kent,³⁴ or do other factors have to be taken into consideration? Let us once again compare examples from the west, east and centre of the Mittani kingdom:

Houses at Ugarit:

Various groundplans and sizes of individual houses exist in the last occupation phase, because most of the houses had been changed, rebuilt and enlarged several times at the expense of neighbouring plots or buildings (Fig. 4). The size of the houses in the “Ville sud”, which were particularly well investigated by Olivier Callot,³⁵ varies between 38 and 290 sqm on ground level.³⁶ But the original size of the plots, before adjacent units were incorporated into large compounds, differed much less. The use of the houses can be deduced mainly from the remaining installations: wells and installation for water evacuation point to activities linked with water; some houses contained tombs below the floor. A staircase leads to the upper storey (or storeys?). Weights and seals testify to trade activities. Strangely, there seem to have been no hearths or ovens on the ground floor; they are thought to have been on the second storey.³⁷ Callot even thinks that no ground level of any house served for living, but rather for storage and various private and perhaps even professional handicraft activities.³⁸ However, it has to be emphasized that the function of the rooms was not derived from the inventory and therefore has to be treated with caution. Moulds for the production of metal tools and weapons were found in the houses, and even ingots are reported from the same quarter (exact location unknown). But because no other proof of metalworking, especially furnaces, was encountered, Callot interprets the moulds as having been stored, but not used in the houses.³⁹ Tools like sickles from wood and flint testify that the inhabit-

34 Kent 1990b.

35 Callot 1994.

36 In some instances there may arise some doubt as to the separation of units, but we refer here to the results of O. Callot.

37 Calvet – Castel 2004.

38 Callot 1994, 156–196.

39 Callot 1994, 187. This is contrary to earlier interpretations of the “Ville sud” as handicraft quarter, where metal workers and goldsmiths, seal cutters and stone sculptors were working: Courtois 1979a, fasc. 52, col. 1264; ead., 1979b.

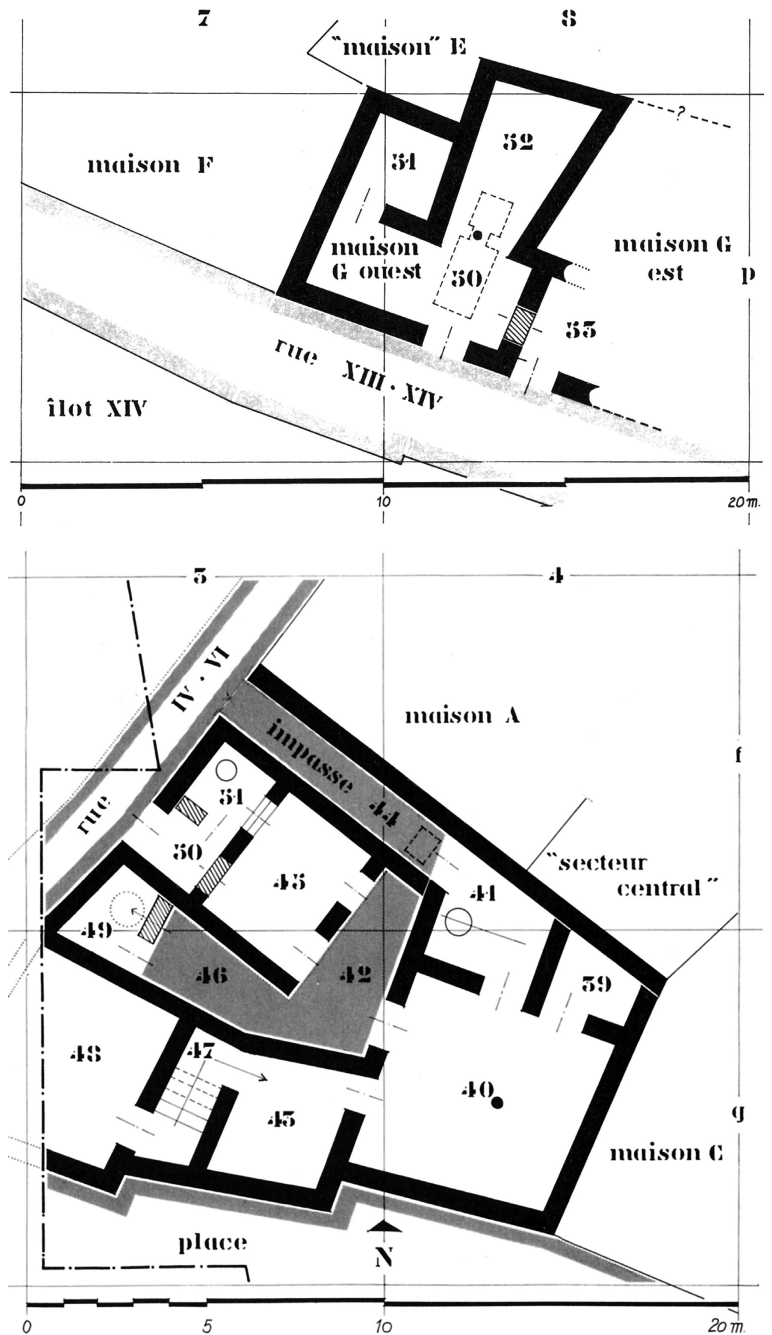


Fig. 4 a, b | Groundplans of a small and a large house at Ugarit:
a) House G, ilot XIII (50 sqm) (Callot 1994, fig. 201);
b) House D, ilot VI (180 sqm), clearly composed from originally separate units (Callot 1994, fig. 80).

ants were involved in agricultural activities.⁴⁰ But the only agricultural production activity that left clear traces in the living quarters is oil production, which is indicated by oil presses (e.g. in house D, îlot VI, locus 41; see Fig. 4b). The production of oil was not only for subsistence, but also for commercial purposes.⁴¹

More recent excavations of approximately 12 houses in the centre of the city⁴² documented the inventory better. But even then the use of the ground floor is not too evident. Wells, silos and installations for the evacuation of water were encountered, and abundant pottery is interpreted as serving for storage and various domestic purposes. But it seems questionable to assert that the ground floor did not serve for living purposes at all, in view of the presence of fine pottery, jewellery and figurines. Closer to the palace existed larger houses of high-ranking people, e.g. the House of Rapānu, scribe of the king, with 300 sqm, and even larger residences of more than 1000 sqm.

Houses at Nuzi:

The size of the houses (including thick walls; the surface of the floors accounts only for about 50 %) varies considerably between 70 and 416 sqm (Fig. 5). The number of rooms is between 5 and 18, on average the houses have 10 rooms, ranging from small to large.⁴³ M. Novak,⁴⁴ who established a typology of the houses, reconstructed the room functions mainly with the help of the installations, e.g. he calls an area with an oven a kitchen, but it seems impossible to progress much further. Novak stated that considerable differences in size, building traditions, installations and equipment and of the households existed in the three excavated domestic areas, possibly pointing to differences in status, social structure and wealth.⁴⁵

Houses at Tall Bazi, Weststadt:

A functional analysis of houses based on the inventory makes sense if, in the ideal case, the settlement was burned or suddenly destroyed by other catastrophes, and if a series of contemporary houses was investigated. These rare conditions were found in the Weststadt of Tall Bazi. Fifty houses were excavated, which were in use at the same time and were all de-

40 Coqueugniot 1991, 159–170.

41 The house in îlot I had an oil press at its disposal. A tablet, found in the same house, testifies to oil commerce; see Callot 1994, 196.

42 Yon 1987.

43 Novak 1994, 374–380.

44 Novak 1994.

45 The results of M. Novak differ slightly from the conclusions reached by Starr, who considers the regularity, the quality of construction and the room size as important markers of status.

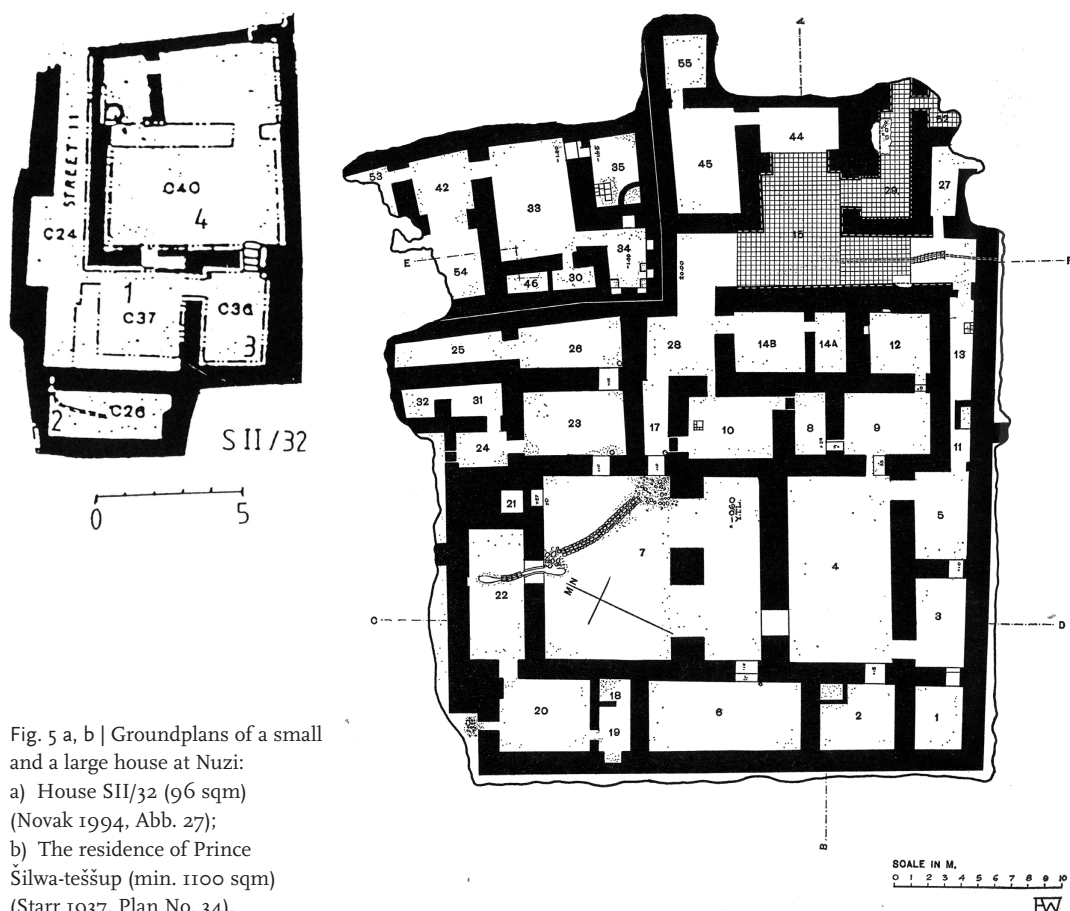


Fig. 5 a, b | Groundplans of a small and a large house at Nuzi:
a) House SII/32 (96 sqm) (Novak 1994, Abb. 27);
b) The residence of Prince Šilwa-teššup (min. 1100 sqm) (Starr 1937, Plan No. 34).

stroyed by fire. After the excavation of the houses was completed, the Tishreen lake flooded the Weststadt and other parts of the lower town in 1999. Since then, many similar houses with similar inventory have been washed free. They indicate that several hundred houses existed in the lower town during the last phase of Late Bronze Age Tall Bazi.

In what follows, the size, form and function of a house, the various domestic, economic and social activities within the houses will be summarized.⁴⁶

The size of the houses:

The sizes of the original plots show little variation. 90% measured between 100 and 200 sqm in the first phase, the standard size of the 50 known plots was between 110 and

⁴⁶ See extensively Otto 2006a.

170 sqm, and about 60 % varied only about 20 % in size (128–159 sqm).⁴⁷ The plots were arranged along planned streets, which were built before the plots were laid out (measured in cubits) and apportioned to different families.⁴⁸ The differences in house size increased during the two phases, corresponding to the two to three generations which were observed. At the end of phase 2, the smallest house then measured 40 sqm, the largest 240 sqm (Fig. 6a). But these differences can be explained by economic developments and property division as a result of inheritance. The majority of the houses still varied only slightly in size (Fig. 6b), which indicates a society which was well organized, but which had no strong horizontal stratification.

Form and function of the houses:

The houses, their installations and the movable equipment were so standardized that it was possible to reconstruct an idealized typical house and its use.⁴⁹ It was made up of a long room flanked by a row of secondary rooms (2–6, on average 4), which were all accessible from the main room. A staircase led to the roof above the main room and to the rooms of the upper storey above the secondary rooms (Fig. 7). The comparison of every individual house with this ideal typical house allows differences in form or use to be recognised immediately.

On the ground floor level, the main room was used for food preparation, cooking and baking, brewing, social gathering, eating and drinking; domestic activities such as spinning; handicraft activities, business; domestic cult; assemblies; circulation and access to the roof. The secondary rooms were used mainly for the storage of provisions, vessels, tools, equipment and perishable materials. Additional rooms existed above the secondary rooms. The roof area above the main room served as an open courtyard for the house. The fallen debris from the upper storey indicates domestic activities, food preparation, storage and more.⁵⁰

Relation between the size and function of a house?

The analysis of the houses revealed the importance of conducting a painstaking activity analysis with the help of the inventory. For example the social status of a house owner cannot be derived from the size of the house or the number of rooms, as House 29 neatly demonstrated:⁵¹ House 29 is one of the smallest within the Weststadt (97 sqm) and has only

47 Otto 2006a, 252–258.

48 Otto 2006a, 254. The walls bordering the streets were clearly erected first and the remainder of the house walls built up against them.

49 Otto 2006a, 41–45, figs. 23a–c.

50 Otto 2006a, 233–250.

51 Otto 2006a, 197–200.

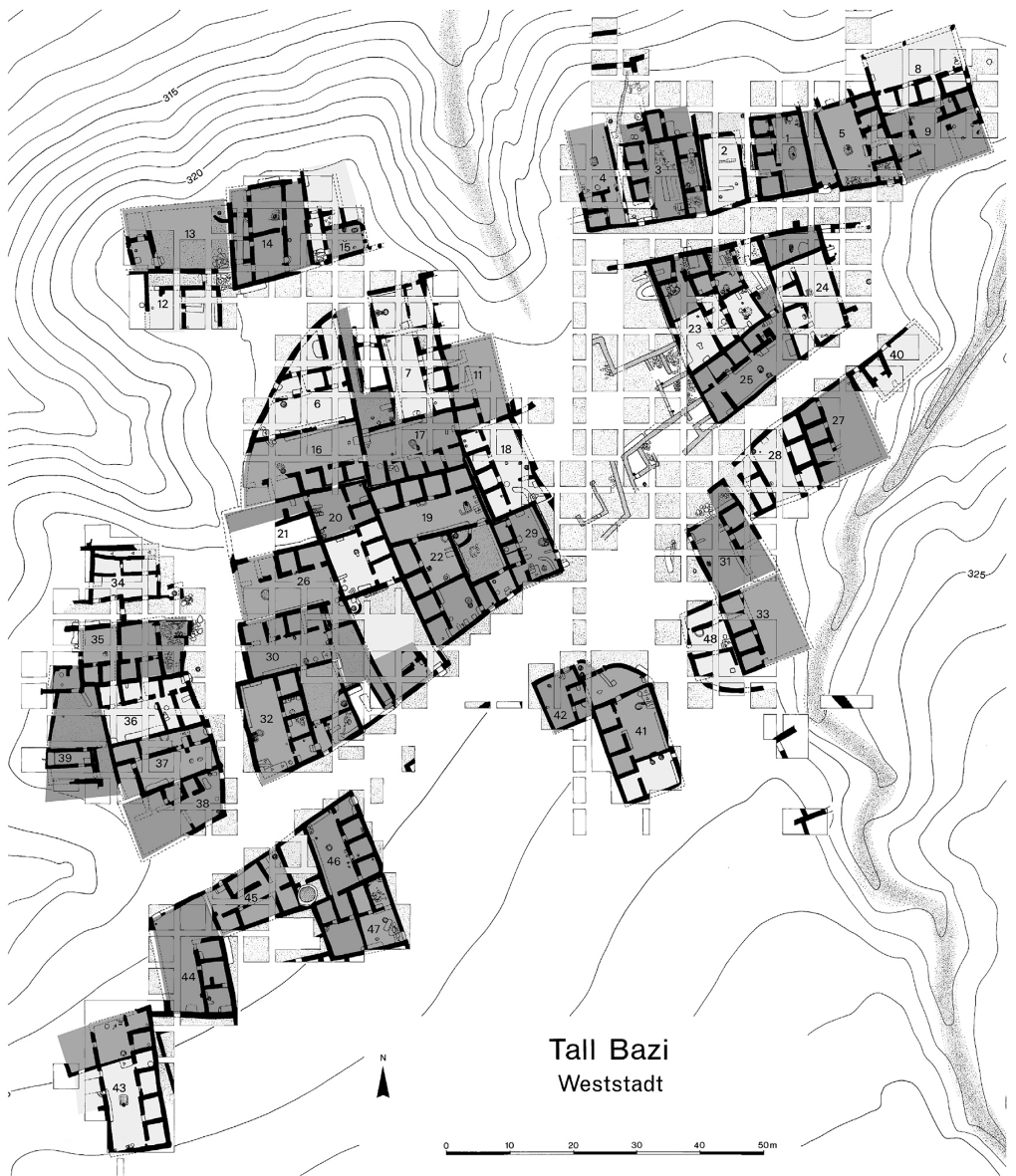


Fig. 6 | The houses of the Weststadt at Tall Bazi in its last phase (Phase 2); the various shadings illustrate different households.

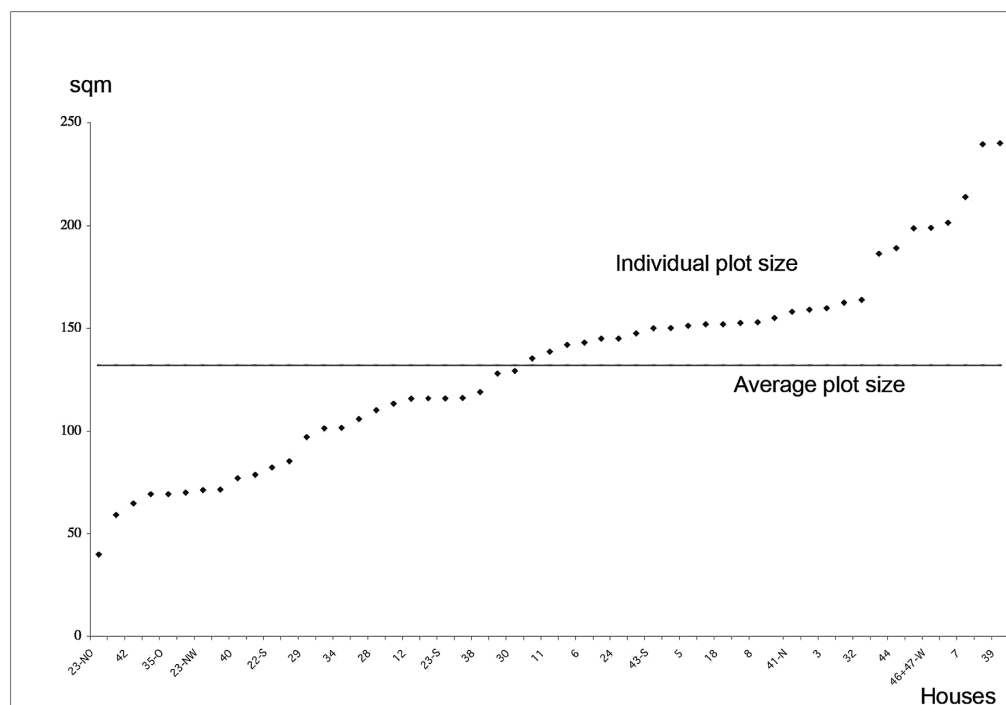


Fig. 6 | The size of the plots of the Weststadt at Tall Bazi in its last phase (Phase 2); the majority of the plots shows little deviation from the average size.

3 secondary rooms on the ground floor (Fig. 7a). However, the amount of pottery vessels points to a household of average size, and the quantity and quality of imported luxury goods indicates strong economic activities. Contrary to the habit common to many other households of carefully protecting the main room against view from any public space, House 29 was entered from an area of high circulation, namely the main road and central place, which probably served as a marketplace. The modest size of the house was apparently tolerated for the benefit of the economically ideal situation at the central place.

Handicraft and economic activities:⁵²

To what extent private handicraft and trade existed in the Ancient Near East, or whether it was organized and controlled by the palace or the state is a widely debated question.⁵³

⁵² Otto 2006a, 282–290.

⁵³ Liverani 1979; Renger 1996, 220.



Fig. 7a | House 29, one of the smallest houses of the Weststadt, economically ideal situated at the central place.

Within several houses at Bazi the remains of handicraft activities were found: a smith's workshop in House 20,⁵⁴ stone cutting activities in House 1, 5, 28(?), 31, 43-S, bone/wood handicraft in House 25, and several others.⁵⁵ The activities took place in the same rooms as the domestic activities – a strong hint at private handicraft, in which the family members were involved. Furthermore, small stone weights (presumably for weighing silver), which were found in nearly every house and at the central place, point to private trading and exchange activities on the part of the inhabitants.

Social processes: division of houses as result of inheritance division(?)

Several houses were divided in the second phase by a wall in the main room (e.g. House 14, 20, 22, 23, 41, 43, 47). The division, which resulted in the reduction of the living space, could be interpreted in different ways, e.g. as the result of the impoverishment of the so-

⁵⁴ Otto 2006a, 246f., figs. 162f.

⁵⁵ Otto 2006a, 246–249.

ciety (e.g. Adamthwaite 2001, 227–232). But in some instances it is evident that the division was caused by normal social processes:

In House 41 a new altar was installed in the larger, northern part of the house, when the house was divided (Fig. 7b). The most plausible explanation seems to be that the heir had to install a new altar for the gods and ancestors when he divided the house. Both parts of the house were well functioning domestic units. The southern part was small (60 sqm), but had all necessary installations and equipment, though not many vessels, including many old and recycled ones. Apparently the inhabitant had full legal capacity, as weights and cylinder seals, stored in the secondary room e, testify (Otto 2006a, 215–220).

Inheritance documents from Emar show that when the head of the family died, the eldest son inherited the main house (*bītu rabû*) with its gods and ancestors; his brothers and sisters received other real estate or moveable property. The share of the widow consisted of precious objects, but not the main house. The texts do not mention where she lived, but it must not have been too far away, because the children had to care for her until she died. Sometimes her right of abode in the house is explicitly mentioned (Arnaud 1985–7, text 176), or half a house is given to the widow, the other half to a son (Arnaud 1991, text 31). House 41-South could well be the part of the house where the widow of the former house owner lived, while House 41-North was the “main house”, where the heir had to install a new altar for the gods and ancestors.

Social gatherings and meetings in the houses and in the temple:

In a few houses important domestic activities were transferred from the main room to an additional room. House 7 is one of the earliest houses of the Weststadt, and one of the largest (214 sqm). The main room has a bench the length of the long side (13 m), on top of which lay only a basalt tripod vessel, and in front of it eating and drinking vessels. In the area of the altar lay the remains of a bull’s skull. Domestic activities like cooking, baking and brewing had been transferred to the additional room f in the second phase, and even the spinning must have taken place here. Could the reason for this transfer of women’s activities be that the main room was used for ceremonies?

Some texts from Emar and Ekalte inform us that private legal affairs were settled among the “brothers”, a public institution with legal competences.⁵⁶ Apparently they assembled in the house of one of the “brothers”, as can be deduced from the formula “PN let the brothers enter” or “PN let the brothers sit down”. During their meeting they broke the *hukku*-bread and anointed the table.⁵⁷ There are several reasons to locate this assembly in the main room of the private houses: the main room of most houses had an altar-like table

⁵⁶ Démare-Lafont 2012.

⁵⁷ Mayer 2001, Nos. 11. 19. 20. 51. 54; Beckman 1996, 59.

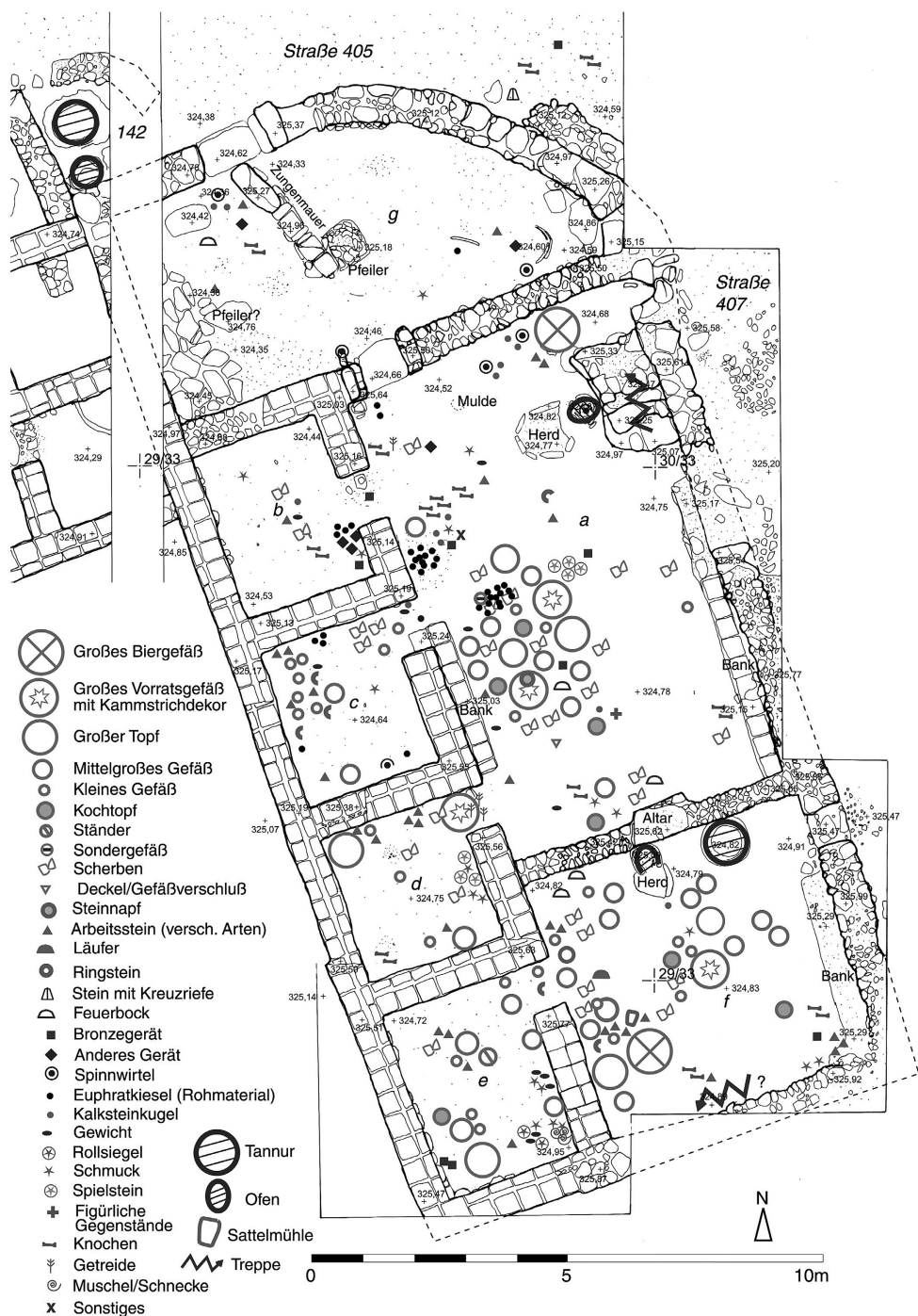


Fig. 7b | House 41, divided probably as a result of an inheritance division.

opposite the entrance and a long bench along one side. The bench clearly served for sitting or reposing as is indicated by the remains of animal furs on it; the fine tableware jugs and plates in front of it prove that meals and drinks were consumed here. The altar seems to have been the social, cultic and economic focal point of the house: close to it were found ordinary vessels containing food as provisions for the ancestors and gods, cultic vessels for libation, figurines and jewellery, but also weights.⁵⁸

The similarities between the layout, size and installations between the main room of a house and the main room of a temple in settlements of the same region are striking. The texts inform us, that the elders of the city together with the city god collectively managed the settlements. Therefore it has been argued that the temple served as a place that was used collectively for administrative purposes, as did the houses at a lower level.⁵⁹ Certain administrative and social functions, which may have been outsourced to official buildings in the palatial societies in the West and East, must have taken place in domestic dwellings and temples.

4 Continuity or discontinuity within the development of domestic space in the Upper Syrian Euphrates Area from the Middle to the Late Bronze Age?

The layout of the Late Bronze Age houses in the Euphrates area slightly varies from site to site, but the basic organisation is the same, namely a main room and one or two rows of secondary rooms.⁶⁰ Has this form already been attested earlier or is there a distinct change between the Middle and Late Bronze Age? J. Margueron, who interpreted Late Bronze Age Emar as a new, Hittite foundation, thought that the front room houses were imported by the Hittites from Anatolia⁶¹.

However, this form already existed in the Middle Bronze age, as McClellan clearly demonstrated.⁶² Relatively few houses are known from MBA levels of the same region. The best evidence comes from Tall Halawa A, Bauschicht 2 (MBA I): the remains of planned housing quarters with a high building density (remains of ca. 80 houses excavated) were found on a surface of approximately 5000 sqm⁶³. The houses of 25–40 sqm consist of a main room, often with a tannur or a plastered working surface. Two, or occasionally one or three, secondary rooms were accessible from the main room. Public buildings and fortifications seem to be missing in the settlement. J.-W. Meyer – puzzled by the uniformity of form and

58 See extensively Otto 2006a, 67–71. 75. 234. 241–244. For a peculiar weight, located together with other weights and beads at the foot of an altar, see Otto 2008.

59 Otto 2006b.

60 McClellan 1997.

61 Margueron 1980, 36.

62 McClellan 1997, fig. 17.

63 Meyer 1989, 20–32, Abb. 6.

inventory and the fact that large storage jars are nearly completely missing – suggested that a socially fairly equal population of workmen and their families, who were dependent on a central authority, lived in these houses.⁶⁴ The evidence of Halawa could, however, be interpreted in a quite different way. The form corresponds to the smaller type of Late Bronze Age houses, e.g. attested at Tall Fray or at Emar, and the enlarged standard house type is simply a duplication of this form. It could be a hint that a low degree of hierarchy and strong collective governance was already present in the Middle Bronze Age in this region.

The excavations at Emar by U. Finkbeiner and his team revealed a continuous sequence of domestic units which persists without any major breaks from the Middle to the Late Bronze Age.⁶⁵ The ground plan of the MBA houses is not yet evident, but it is conceivable that they resembled the contemporary houses at the neighbouring site Tall Halawa. The smaller house form, the “front room house”, could have remained in use in the LBA, while larger house forms developed at the same time, possibly derived from two joined front room houses. Some scholars have interpreted the differences in the sizes of the houses as indicators of the social or economic position of the households. The small houses at Emar have even been interpreted as the homes of day labourers who had to work for family businesses that were situated in the large houses.⁶⁶ But without considering the material in the houses, such conclusions are rash. As we saw before, size alone is no sound indicator of the social position of the house owner, but other factors such as physical environment, economy, and variations in household composition can be determinant. It is more convincing to conclude that corporate political structures were already strong in the MBA.

Daniel Fleming (2004) spoke of “Democracy’s Ancient Ancestors” in this respect. As long as powerful kings such as Samsi-Addu, his son Yasmaḥ-Addu and his successors (e.g. Zimrī-Lim in Mari) in Upper Mesopotamia and the rulers of Yamḥad in Syria were in control, the power of these corporate political structures was inevitably limited. With the collapse of these kingdoms, however, the collective structures seem to have gained much power, at least in the Euphrates valley. The texts are not very informative in this respect, and therefore the archaeological sources are of special importance. We know relatively little about what became of Mari after it was destroyed by Hammurapi of Babylon, but at Tall Bi’a / ancient Tuttul an interesting transformation can be observed: The main mound E had housed the political and administrative centre of the city at least from the Early Bronze Age III onwards. A series of palaces formed a mound approximately 10m in height. The last palace was destroyed by Zimrī-Lim, when the Upper Mesopotamian kingdom of Samsi-Addu disappeared.⁶⁷ Above the remains of the last palace, still the most prominent point in the

64 Meyer 1989, 32; Akkermans – Schwartz 2003, 308.

65 Finkbeiner 2003.

66 McClellan 1997, 44.

67 Unlike what has been claimed in Miglus – Strommenger 2003, the palace was never used by Zimrī-Lim. Numerous fragile sealings and tablets, dated to Yasmaḥ-Addu, which were scattered on the uppermost floor, testify that the palace was last used under his regency.



Fig. 8 | Late Bronze age houses overlie the uppermost palace of King Yasmah-Addu at the “palace mound” E in Tall Bi’a / Tuttul (map combined from Miglus – Strommenger 2002, Tafel 99, i.2., and Miglus – Strommenger 2003, Beilage 6).

city, several houses were erected in the Late Bronze Age (Fig. 8). They resemble the well known house types from Tall Munbaqa, Tall Bazi, etc. Apparently, the main impact of Tuttul in the LBA lay in its role as the main cultic centre of the god Dagan, but not as a royal residence.⁶⁸ Tuttul was situated outside the kingdom of Mittani. Therefore it is improbable that collective governance was particularly strong in the Euphrates area *because* the Mittanian king was the overlord and did not allow for other kings. Rather it seems that the local models of organisation functioned independently and were stable in themselves.

68 Krebernik 2001, 14.

Conclusions

The organisation of residential space can be deduced only at sites where considerable parts of the archaeological inventory have been preserved and where a series of contemporary houses has been investigated. A careful analysis of the assemblages and the use of space leads to the definition of activity areas. Their interpretation, concerning the social or economic status of the household, can be put forward with the help of contemporary texts. Until now these conditions have not been met in the western and eastern parts of the Mittani kingdom, and therefore it is difficult to decide whether different models of governance are reflected not only in the extant elements of the settlements, which differ distinctly (palaces, residences and houses as major elements in the West and East, and houses and temples as major elements in the Euphrates region), but in every domestic dwelling, too.

A considerable difference between the regions consists in the diversity of house size. In settlements with a palace-based society the margin between modest houses and spacious residences is much larger than in the collectively governed settlements, where the layout and size of the houses varies only a little. Another difference may exist in the activities which took place in the houses (although this is difficult to judge without an accurate activity analysis of the Alalakh, Ugarit or Nuzi houses). In the houses of the Middle Euphrates region social, economic, and handicraft activities certainly took place. There is evidence of several handicrafts and even metal working in the houses, whereas the moulds in the Ugarit houses seem to have been stored, but not used on site. Could this strange situation be explained by the fact that metal handicraft in particular was supposed to be in the hands of the palace?

S. Kent (1990) proposed that the functional diversity of settlements, houses and rooms increased parallel to the complexity of society. Therefore McClellan (1997) supposed that in Inner Syria the highly centralised kingdoms of the MBA were replaced by more loosely organized political and socio-economical systems in the LBA. He thought that this process began at the end of the MBA parallel to the decrease of sedentarism. The simpler social structures and the local, less tightly organized political systems would have been an easy victim of the Mittani and Hittite Empires. However, there is no reason to suppose that this model of collectively governed settlements functioned only in strongly dependent polities. On the contrary, it proved to be a more stable system than the kingdoms of the Middle Bronze Age.

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The Mittani State: The Formation of the Kingdom of Mittani

During the 15th century BC and the first half of the 14th century BC Mittani was a powerful kingdom; the state ruled over a large area, from the Upper Khabur to the Middle Euphrates, from Eastern Anatolia to North-Western Syria. Unfortunately we have only very few Mittanian sources concerning the political organization of this kingdom and its relations to subordinate states and polities. We have even less information about the early history of Mittani, that is about the events that brought about its formation.

This intriguing topic may be of some interest in this workshop, which deals specifically with the transition from the Amorite to the Mittani period. Mittani is mentioned for the first time in an Egyptian source, the Thebes grave inscription of the state official Amenemhet; he recalls having participated in a military expedition on Syrian territory and in this context the country of *Mtn* is mentioned. Even though Amenemhet served under three pharaohs (Ahmose I, Amenhotep I, Thutmose I), it is generally thought that this Syrian expedition coincides with the one led by Thutmose I¹ (1493–1483 BC).²

There is still substantial disagreement regarding the time and the historical context in which the state of Mittani was formed. Two hypotheses have been put forth and continue to be upheld by scholars, although with varying motivations and reasoning:

1. Mittani was already a powerful kingdom at the end of the 17th century or in the first half of the 16th century BC, thus its beginnings date to well before the time of Thutmose I, dating instead to the time of the Hittite sovereigns Hattusili I and Mursili I.
2. Mittani emerged from a political vacuum in Syria, which had been created first through the destruction of the kingdom of Yamhad by the Hittites and then through the inability of Hatti to maintain control of the region during the period following Mursili's I death. The inscription of Amenemhet would therefore be one of the earliest pieces of evidence that the Mittanian state had become a political entity of some importance.

Clearly, the problem is even more complex because of our inability to establish an absolute chronology for the period in question, both for Hittite history as well as for the history of the entire ancient Near East.³

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¹ Wilhelm 1994, 287; de Martino 2004, 35.

² So according to Hornung et al. 2006, 492.

³ For the Egyptian chronology see Hornung et al. 2006; for the Anatolian chronology see Klinger 2006; for the absolute date of Mursili II's expedition against Babylon see Boese 2008; for the chronology of Mittani, see de Martino 2004.

1.

The first hypothesis has been supported by, among others, Wilhelm,⁴ Klinger,⁵ and, more recently, by Kühne⁶ and Novak.⁷ This hypothesis is based mainly, but not exclusively, upon the interpretation of certain Hittite documents. The treaty between Muwattalli II of Hatti and Talmi-Šarruma of Aleppo,⁸ dating to the 13th century BC, has been interpreted as proof that a Mittani state already existed during the 16th century BC. The most significant events that characterised the relationship between Hatti and Aleppo are presented very concisely in the historical introduction of this treaty. The text first mentions Hattusili I, then goes on to describe the conquest of Aleppo (?) first by Mursili I and then by Tuthaliya I/II. The latter event was brought about through an act of betrayal by Aleppo, which had entered into an alliance with Mittani. Thereafter, the treaty refers to an attack by Aleppo against Hattusili “King of Hatti”. In this context the text describes a problem related to the borders between Aleppo, Aštata, and Nuhašše, a problem that would have been faced first by the king of Mittani⁹ and then by Hattusili. Lastly, the conquest of Aleppo by Suppiluliuma I is mentioned. As is already known, this particular passage has long been the object of discussion¹⁰, but no satisfactory solution has been proposed. The interpretation depends on how one reconstructs the sequence of Hittite sovereigns and, in particular, on whether one assumes the existence of a king Hattusili II, who might have reigned after Tuthaliya I and before Tuthaliya II. The existence of this supposed king Hattusili II is inferred exclusively from this particular passage in the treaty of Aleppo; there are no other sources that refer to him unambiguously. Therefore, many scholars believe that a king Hattusili II¹¹ did not actually exist. If, on the other hand, the Hattusili, King of Hatti, that is mentioned in this treaty was indeed Hattusili I, there would therefore already have been a kingdom of Mittani at the end of the 17th century BC or at the beginning of the 16th century BC. Furthermore, the treaty with Talmi-Šarruma would also indicate that Aleppo had been subject to Mittani before the Hittite conquests during the times of Hattusili I and Mursili I. In fact, in the treaty we read that the people of Aštata and Nuhašše had requested territories that belonged to Aleppo from the King of Mittani, who accepted their request. Later the people of Aštata and Nuhašše turned to Hattusili, asking for these same territories. In addition, a passage from the Idrimi Inscription (ll. 45–51), in which Idrimi states that his ancestors were subordinate to the “kings of the Hurrian troops”, has been inter-

4 Wilhelm 1989, 20; Wilhelm 1994, 291.

5 Klinger 1988, 27–42.

6 Kühne 1999, 210.

7 Novak 2007, 389.

8 Beckman 1996, 88–90.

9 In this text both Hanigalbat and Mittani appear and they refer to the Mittanian Kingdom; see Wilhelm 1994, 289; Carruba 2008, 89 n. 11.

10 Na’aman 1980 and see de Martino 2010.

11 De Martino 2010, 190–191.

puted as further proof for the supposed alliance between Aleppo and the Mittani kings at this early point in time.

As is already known, the name of Mittani never appears in the Hittite sources of the Old Kingdom. Only the Akkadian version of the Annals of Hattusili I (KBo X 1 Obv. 11)¹² mentions the enemy of Hanigalbat, which in the Hittite version (A I 24)¹³ appears as “the Hurrian enemy”. The mention of Hanigalbat has been interpreted as an anachronistic insertion of a later time, since the tradition of Hattusili’s annals is very complex and the tablet of the Akkadian version dates to the Hittite Imperial Age.¹⁴ However, van Koppen¹⁵ quotes two Old Babylonian texts, one from the time of Ammišaduqa and the other from the time of Samsuditana (but in a Neo-Assyrian manuscript), that mention “Hanigalbatean troops”. That the geographical (or geo-political?) term Hanigalbat was already used in Old Babylonian times might explain its presence in the Akkadian Version of Hattusili’s annals, thus making it unnecessary to attribute it to a later copyist who would have updated the text.¹⁶ The mention of Hanigalbat in texts of this period might indicate the presence of a Hurrian state that could have been connected in some way to the kingdom of Mittani / Hanigalbat.

Although it is indeed true that Hittite sources do not explicitly mention Mittani, it is also true that the expression “King of the Hurrian Troops” (LUGAL ÉRIN^{MEŠ} *Hurri*) is used on several occasions to describe Hurrian rulers. This phrase appears both in Hittite sources from the time of Hattusili I and Mursili I (KBo III 6o III 13’–16’;¹⁷ KBo III 46 + II 54’¹⁸), in the Idrimi Inscription as well as in subsequent sources related to Mittani kings. The continuity in the usage of this royal title from the sixteenth to the fifteenth century BC has been considered as an argument in favour of hypothesizing that Mittani already existed during the age of the Old Hittite Kingdom.¹⁹

Another piece of evidence that would speak in favour of the existence of the Mittani state during the time of the Old Hittite Kingdom can be seen in the continuous and well organised military resistance by the Hurrians against the Hittites. This is mentioned in Hittite sources dating to Hattusili I and Mursili I.²⁰

Van Koppen has recently arrived at a similar conclusion – albeit by means of a completely different route. In analysing Old Babylonian slave sale contracts van Koppen noted that the number of slaves imported from Northern Mesopotamia during the time of

¹² Devecchi 2005, 38f.

¹³ De Martino 2003, 36f.

¹⁴ De Martino 2003, 24–28; de Martino 2004, 35.

¹⁵ Van Koppen 2004, 21 nn. 65f.

¹⁶ Van Koppen 2004, 21 n. 67; Devecchi 2005, 39, n. 90.

¹⁷ Bayun 1995, 23, 25.

¹⁸ De Martino 2003, 142–143.

¹⁹ Kühne 1999, 208f.

²⁰ De Martino 1992, 19–37.

Ammišaduqa fell considerably;²¹ this might indicate, according to van Koppen, “the presence of a strong power in Northern Mesopotamia.” Van Koppen identifies this power as a “unified Hurrian polity, of unknown dimensions and known by the name of Hanigalbat”.²²

2.

We now move on to examine the evidence upon which the second hypothesis has been based, namely the hypothesis which dates the formation of the Mittani state to the end of the sixteenth century BC.²³ The first, stronger, motivation in favour of this hypothesis is the fact that the historical narratives of the kings of the Old Hittite Kingdom²⁴ frequently speak of the Hurrians, but they never mention Mittani, as we have already stated. These sources show that Hattusili I and Mursili I encountered a whole host of polities during their military campaigns to Syria, the main ones being Uršum, Haššum, Hahhum. These potentates were supported by Aleppo as well as by the Hurrians. The Hurrians that are mentioned as adversaries of the Hittites, are generically called by the ethno-linguistic term *Hurla/i*. The term *Hurla/i* can be linked to the ethnic and geographical name *Hurri*;²⁵ the latter form is documented in texts in Hittite and in Akkadian, but in some way also in the Hurrian language itself. Thus, the Mittani Letter mentions the adjective *hurr(i)=o=ge* “Hurrian”.²⁶ It is not altogether clear whether the ancient Hittite form *Hurla/i* is a Hattian loanword, as proposed by Soysal,²⁷ or whether it is a Hittite formation.²⁸

The Hurrians are mentioned among the allies of Uršum in the Old Hittite narrative on the siege of Uršum KBo I 11;²⁹ the Annals of Hattusili I report a Hurrian attack that had occurred when the king of Hatti was fighting in western Anatolia.³⁰ The Hurrians were a threat and were also opposed to the Hittite advance in Syria during the kingdom of Mursili I.³¹ In any case, these Hittite sources never give the impression that the Hittites were facing a unified Hurrian front. On the contrary, four Hurrian “kings”, for example, were

21 Van Koppen 2004, 9–33.

22 Van Koppen 2004, 23.

23 Klengel 1978, 107; Oates et al. 1997, 145; Salvini 1998, 310; de Martino 2004, 36; von Dassow 2008, 19f. See now also Şerifoğlu (2009, 171) who writes that the expansion of Mittani in Syria started soon after the campaign of Mursili I.

24 De Martino 2003.

25 Wilhelm 1989, 1; Wilhelm 1992, 289.

26 Wegner 2000, 48; Giorgieri 2000, 174.

27 O. Soysal 2004, 880 mentions the Hattian word *wa_a-a-hur-la*, but as Taracha 2002, 14 n. 49, observes it is not clear if in all Hittite texts *Hurla* always means Hurrian; in fact in some cases it seems that there is another word *hurla* (connected to Hittite texts of Hattian tradition) with a different meaning.

28 Tischler 1978, 304f.

29 Beckman 1995, 26; Kühne 1999, 207.

30 De Martino 2003, 36f.

31 De Martino 1992, 19–37.

present at the same time during the events that are described in the Old Hittite text KBo III 6o III 13'–16';³² the events narrated in this text may be dated to the time of Hattusili I.³³

The significance of the political and military operation led by Hattusili I, which he mentioned in a letter he sent to Tunip-Tešob, ruler of Tikunani, has to be seen against the background of political fragmentation in the Hurrian world, fragmentation that created polities that were in competition with each other.³⁴

As is already known in this letter, the Hittite king made an agreement with the ruler of Tigunani to attack Hahhum together (ll. 13–16).³⁵ Tikunani was in the region of the Upper Tigris, east of Nihriya;³⁶ Hattusili I, upon finding it difficult to beat the resistance of the northern Syrian centres supported by Aleppo, made an agreement with an eastern Hurrian principality so that he could attack the enemy on two fronts. Evidently, the ruler of Tikunani could hope that he would achieve advantages of a territorial or economic nature from a Hittite victory over the more western centres.

Salvini has stressed that in the Tikunani documents there is no mention of Mittani and this led him to infer that Mittani did not exist at that time.³⁷ This statement is not shared by Miller³⁸ or by van Koppen.³⁹ Miller believes it to be possible that Mittani “was located, for example, in the Western Hābūr and was expanding at this time primarily to the west and east,⁴⁰ but not along the Uppermost Tigris”. In my opinion, it is hard to believe that, at the time of Hattusili I and Mursili I, Mittani was able to send troops as far as Anatolia but had not extended its political control over the geographically closer northern regions, that is, for example, over the region of Tikunani. Furthermore, it is equally difficult to suppose that a small potentate like Tikunani was called upon by Hattusili I to oppose a coalition led by the powerful state of Mittani.

Archi⁴¹ has recently proposed that a certain Pizikarra of Niniveh, along with his Hurrian troops, attacked and destroyed Ebla. Archi bases his theory on Neu's interpretation of a passage in the “Song of Release”,⁴² the Hittite and Hurrian bilingual composition about the destruction of Ebla, which is preserved in archives from two temples at Hattusa. This composition most probably dates back to the time immediately following the last period of Ebla

32 See most recently de Martino 2002, with previous literature.

33 De Martino 2002, 77f.; Forlanini 2004a, 256, thinks that this text might refer to the time of Labarna I.

34 Salvini 1995, 61–80; Salvini 1996, 107–114; de Martino 2002; Durand 2006, 219–227.

35 The interpretation of these lines is quite difficult and different translations have been proposed, see Salvini 1996, 113f.; Durand 2006, 221; Hoffner 2009, 78f.

36 Charpin 2000; Miller 2001b.

37 Salvini 1996, 13.

38 Miller 2001a, 423.

39 Van Koppen 2004, 23 n. 86.

40 Miller 2001a, 423.

41 Archi 2001; Archi 2007, 189.

42 Neu 1996, 30f.

in the Middle Bronze Age.⁴³ Archi's hypothesis might give rise to further interesting conjectures about the extent of Hurrian action in this time (from the area of the Upper Khabur up to Western Syria). It might also indicate that the military expeditions of the Hittite kings in Syria were related to conflicts among Hurrian potentates from Upper Mesopotamia to Western Syria. However, this intriguing hypothesis is only founded upon Neu's interpretation of the fragmentary passage KBo XXXII 11 I 8, who had read the signs at the end of line 8 as *paḥ*[e-, the beginning of the Hurrian verb *paḥ*- "to destroy". Wilhelm (2001, 85) in his translation of this text into German does not follow Neu's reading; as a matter of fact, the sign that is partially preserved is not HE, but I (so that the fragmentary verbal expression is: *pai*[-).⁴⁴ Therefore, the hypothesis that Ebla was attacked by Hurrian troops cannot be substantiated. Rather, it seems more probable that either Hattusili I (Ebla is mentioned in the *Res Gestae* of this King)⁴⁵ or Mursili I were responsible for the end of Ebla.

3.

Let us return to the birth of the Mittani state. Several scholars believe that its military expansion over large parts of Syria was favoured by the political vacuum that the Hittites created in Syria.⁴⁶ I agree that the most convincing hypothesis is the one that dates the beginning of the Mittani state to after the reign of Mursili I,⁴⁷ even if the existence of a Hurrian polity that might have developed into the state of Mittani already in the 16th century cannot be excluded. Regarding the period of the birth of the Mittani state, we have to stress that Hittite texts from the Old Kingdom never make any reference to a Hurrian unitary political entity, as has already been mentioned above. In some cases, the Hurrians are only mentioned generically (*Hurla/i* or *Hurri*), while other texts explicitly mention Hurrian rulers or commanders of Hurrian troops. Let us now look at the attestations of Hurrian rulers in the Old Hittite texts and at their role in the historical narratives.

A text on a Hittite military expedition at the time of Hattusili I,⁴⁸ (KBo III 60 III 14'-16') tells us that the king (LUGAL) of the city of Ilanzura⁴⁹ asked the "Kings of the Hurrian troops" (LUGAL^{MEŠ} ÉRIN^{MEŠ} *Hurri*) for help after he was attacked by troops of Hatti,⁵⁰ and,

43 Neu 1996, 3-7; Wilhelm 1992, 123; Haas – Wegner 1997, 438. Wilhelm 2008, 192-193 writes that this epic narrative originally belonged to the tradition of the city of Igingallis and that its tradition might have been preserved in Haššum.

44 I thank Dr. Mauro Giorgieri, who has collated the photographs of the tablet, for this information.

45 De Martino 2003, 108f.

46 Klengel 1978, 107; Klengel 1992, 86; de Martino 2004, 36; von Dassow 2008, 19f.

47 See also de Martino 2004, 36.

48 See n. 32.

49 For the geographical position of this city see Forlanini 2004b, 284f. and n. 12 with literature.

50 De Martino 2002, 83f., n. 43 with previous literature.

perhaps, promised them golden vessels (the passage is fragmentary).⁵¹ We may infer from this passage that Ilanzura had turned to Hurrian chiefs for help (recognised in the text with the title of “king”) in return for gold.

In the narrative on the Siege of Uršum (KBo I 11), we see that the city of Uršum, although besieged by the Hittites, was able to remain in contact with its allies. Its allies were Aleppo, the city of Zalwar/Zarwar,⁵² Hurrian troops, and a person called Zuppa. As far as the Hurrians were concerned, the Hurrian messenger who arrived at Uršum was called “the servant of the Son of the Storm-god”.⁵³ The latter stated the following: “(Rev. 30–31) I have gathered these (quantities of) silver, garments, oxen (and) sheep, and I will give (these) to the Hurrian troops.”⁵⁴ As is already known, the expression, “Son of the Storm God”⁵⁵ in this text has often been examined by scholars because it has been supposed that it might allude to the king of Mittani, even though there is no proof that it belonged to the titles of the kings of Mittani.⁵⁶ This very same expression is present in another passage from the text of the siege of Uršum; here the following news is referred to the king of Hatti: “(Rev. 7–8) The sons of the Son of the Storm-god are fighting one another over kingship.”⁵⁷ This passage would appear to allude either to a struggle related to the dynastic succession of the sons of the Hurrian ruler, ally of Uršum, or to a fight between Hurrian chiefs.

In the *Res Gestae* of a Hittite King of the Old Kingdom (in my opinion Mursili I),⁵⁸ KBo III 46 + KUB XXVI 75 and duplicates, we can see that during a very critical moment in the struggle between the Hittites and the Hurrians, when it seemed that the latter were about to take control of the city of Hurma, the gods helped Hatti. The gods spread an epidemic disease among the Hurrians (*Hurla*) and they began to die. Nippa *tuzziyaš* EN “lord of the army”⁵⁹ died; even Karawani, Paraiuna and Aiuktaeraya, all “lords of the army”, died.⁶⁰

As Kühne has already pointed out,⁶¹ ancient Hittite texts show that the southeast Anatolian and Syrian polities attacked by the Hittites could hope for some possibility of rescue only if they received help from the Hurrian troops.

The presence of a number of Hurrian Kings (as documented in KBo III 60) and the mention of different titles to indicate the Hurrian chiefs would appear to show that the Hurrians that were militarily active against the Hittites did not belong to one single political entity but were either rulers of Hurrian polities or even chiefs of mercenary Hurrian troops, as

51 Most recently Bayun 1995, 23, 25; see also Wilhelm 1994, 292.

52 Miller 2001a, 73f.

53 Beckman 1995, 26f.; Kühne 1999, 207 and n. 27.

54 Beckman 1995, 27.

55 Wilhelm 1994, 292.

56 Kühne 1999, 208f. and n. 29.

57 Beckman 1995, 24, 26.

58 De Martino 2003, 129f.

59 See Beal 1992, 422.

60 See de Martino 2003, 136f.

61 Kühne 1999, 208.

the payment of gold or other goods to these troops would testify (see KBo III 6o and the text of the siege of Uršum).

Van Koppen has shown that in the land of Babylon at the time of King Samsuiluna there is evidence for “the decisive role of large armies of mercenaries in resolving inter-state conflicts in Northern Mesopotamia. This seems to be a relatively new phenomenon and may be explained in part as the manifestation of uprooted people from the Zagros and elsewhere.”⁶²

Durand⁶³ believes that the groups (ÉRIN^{MEŠ}) of *ḫabiru* listed in the Prism of Tikunani published by Salvini (1996) were refugees coming from Hahhum paid by Tunib-Tešob, king of Tikunani, to take action against Hahhum.⁶⁴ Thus, this document indicates as well how the militia employed by states and polities were established during conflicts in this period. The contentious situation that the continual and repeated Hittite campaigns in Syria had caused may have popularised the practice of resorting to mercenary troops, and in this way facilitated the formation of militarily powerful groups.

It is possible that the early stages of the Mittani state should be located within this particular framework;⁶⁵ the adoption of the title “King of the Hurrian troops” by the sovereigns of Mittani is a clear indication of the importance of military power in the political structures of this state.⁶⁶ The etymology of Mittani, as Wilhelm has recently shown,⁶⁷ i.e., “(the land) of M(a)itta”, links the name of this country not to a geographical area nor to an ethno-linguistic group but to a person, more likely one of the first and most important rulers. This would seem to agree with the hypothesis of viewing the emergence of Mittani in connection with the acquisition of civil power by a military leader.⁶⁸

This hypothesis that military activity, the power of the army, and the presence of military chiefs were a key element in the emergence of a unified Hurrian state does not mean that we can attribute this process to groups of Indo-Aryan origin.

Secondary literature on the Hurrians has often strongly favoured the hypothesis that the political and military success of Mittani should be attributed to a leading group of Indo-Aryans.⁶⁹ I agree with von Dassow’s⁷⁰ recent arguments, which question the heroic views of an Indo-Aryan presence in Mesopotamia. As a matter of fact, there is no direct and explicit relationship between the affirmation of Mittani as a Hurrian political entity, which assumed its dominion over the whole northern Syrian area, and the tradition which links the royal dynasty of Mittani to Indo-Aryan culture and language.

62 Van Koppen 2004, 20; see also Richardson 2005.

63 Durand 2006, 224; see also Hoffner 2009, 76.

64 On the personal names of the Tiguanani’s Prism see Richter 1998, 125–134.

65 See now also Forlanini 2009.

66 See Kühne 1999, 208f.; van Koppen 2004, 23.

67 Wilhelm 1994, 290.

68 As van Koppen, 2004, 23, writes.

69 So, for example, Kühne 1999, 209; Freu 2003, 21–23.

70 Von Dassow 2008, 77–81.

The reasons that may have led one of the eastern Hurrian principalities (progenitor of Mittani and perhaps already concentrated in the area of the Upper Khabur) to become the leading polity of the whole region are most likely unrelated to their Indo-Aryan connections. Yet these reasons have to remain unclear, since we lack textual sources for this period. It is most likely that there were other Hurrian polities in Upper Mesopotamia, such as, for example, Tigunani, but we do not know the nature of their relations with each other or with Hatti and Babylon. Furthermore, we do not know what might have been the connections between the Kassites and the Hurrian polities; we do not even know what the actual impact of the raid led by Mursili I against Babylon was, nor what the potential consequences were. We can only guess that the destruction of the kingdom of Yamhad and the annihilation of many of Western Syria's potentates facilitated the expansion of a powerful eastern polity, most likely a polity that had already gained control of the Upper Khabur region and that had not exhausted its resources in the conflicts with Hatti.

Limiting the significance of the Indo-Aryan component in the origins and formation of the kingdom of Mittani does not imply, however, that we want to deny the fact that the sovereigns of Mittani had Indo-Aryan names. Indeed, it is evident that maintaining this tradition throughout the entire history of Mittani signifies that the dynasty considered the usage of Indo-Aryan names to have been a distinctive and qualifying element.⁷¹

Van Koppen⁷² wonders whether the adoption of Indo-Aryan names is an original or a secondary feature in the Kingdom of Mittani. The etymology of M(a)itta⁷³ is obscure and, therefore, this name can provide us with no indication whatsoever. The first Mittanian king known to us who bears a name of Indo-Aryan origin is Šuttarna;⁷⁴ this might indicate that the tradition of adopting Indo-Aryan names was born with Šuttarna; however, the lack of information on this period of Mittanian history and on Šuttarna's ascent to power does not allow us to come to any sort of conclusion.

Indeed, as is already known, Šuttarna's name is only attested on a seal impression⁷⁵ dating to the reign of Sauštatar. It was used to seal the texts *AlT* 13 and 14 (two tablets that record royal decisions in legal cases),⁷⁶ and also some Terqa documents – if indeed *Saitarna* is a variant of the spelling of Šuttarna, as Rouault⁷⁷ has suggested.

Over the last few years, the sources related to Mittani have increased thanks to the discoveries found at Emar, Tall Brak, Tall Bazi, Umm el-Marra and Terqa; the renewed excavations at Tall Fakhariya allow us to hope that more information on Mittani will be made available to us in the future, so that we can study the early history of this state more precisely.

71 Von Dassow 2008, 86.

72 Van Koppen 2004, 23 n.87.

73 Wilhelm 1994, 290.

74 The etymology of the name Kirta (father of Šuttarna) is not yet clear, see von Dassow 2008, 86 n. 212; see also Wilhelm 1989, 28.

75 Stein 1989, 40.

76 Von Dassow 2008, 46.

77 Rouault 2004, 57.

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The Imperial Space – The Early Hittite Kingdom

With the advance of the Assyrians into Anatolia, 50 years after the end of the Ur III-period, and the foundation of merchant colonies in or at least nearby local urban centres, the knowledge of cuneiform writing came to Anatolia. This was in the second half of the 20th century during the reign of Erišum I king of Aššur – according to the new *limu*-lists his reign should have begun in 1974 BC.¹ The trade continued to develop and over time more and more colonies and trading stations were founded, ultimately forming a hierarchical structure with Kārum Kaneš at its head. The documentation of the Old Assyrian merchants comprises several thousand texts and names numerous different stations in Anatolia. In recent years a few somewhat fragmentary treaty-tablets have provided new information, showing that the local rulers used the Old Assyrian scribes for their own purposes. These treaties outline the general arrangements between the Anatolians² and the representatives of the Assyrian merchants, fixing for example various stipulations concerning economic transactions. The local rulers had the right to tax caravans passing their territories, and in exchange they granted the Assyrians the right to govern themselves, offered protection and guaranteed open roads. The thousands of letters, legal documents and economic transactions found in the *kārum*s and *wabartum*s – mainly in *kārum* Kaneš but also in other cities like Ḫattuša – usually deal only with matters of trade: costs and taxes, problems with transport and roads and so on. And only in this context do we find some information about the background of the trade and its significance for the political situation in Anatolia and the relations between the Assyrian traders and the local rulers.

But even if the main focus of the textual material is not on the political situation, military activities or other relevant historiographical information, there are hints of closed roads, travel suspensions or general unrest, resulting from conflicts between the local rulers.³ The Assyrian texts mention several local Anatolian kingdoms called *mātu*. For a number of years mainly in the *kārum* II period the political situation seems to have been rather stable and the merchants were able to carry out their activities unimpeded. But ulti-

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1 See now Veenhof 2008a, 13–264, esp. 19–34, 122–146.

2 We do not know exactly when groups of people speaking different Indo-European dialects or languages arrived in Anatolia – the material remains, as the records from the merchant archives show, are inconclusive in this respect, but the linguistic details tend towards the end of the 3rd millennium BCE; see Oettinger 2004, 357–369; Melchert 2003, 10–26; Rieken 2006, 271–285. For different interpretations of the available linguistic data see Goedegebuure 2008, 137–180; Yakubovich 2008, 123–134.

3 The letter KTS 2, 40, 27ff. reports, that: “there is peace in Burušhattum”; the letter mentions a peace treaty between the two cities Burušhattum and Ulama; see Veenhof 2008a, 205.

mately the destruction of level II of *kārum* Kaneš must have resulted from military conflict in Anatolia – perhaps the increasing level of trading activities led to competition between the local rulers in the form of some kind of territorial rivalry. Because of the trade regulations, we can assume that the importance of boundaries and the consciousness of clear-cut territories became more and more important. The more cities with Assyrian colonies an Anatolian prince controlled the more he would profit from the trading on the one hand. On the other hand only independent rulers could deal with a trading colony directly and on their own.⁴

The Assyrian texts draw a very raw picture of the political situation in Central Anatolia in the 18th and early 17th century, but we can try to fill out this picture using an important text from the Hittite archives that concern historical events from the time before the formation of the Hittite kingdom.⁵

The famous Anitta text, which was found in the archives of Hattusa, is attested there in three versions all in the Hittite language – an Old Hittite original and two later copies. The text describes events from the time of level Ib of *kārum* Kaneš in a clear historiographical manner without any parallel in the tradition of the Old Assyrian texts. Yet it is unclear whether it is translation from Akkadian – Old Assyrian or Old Babylonian – to Hittite or a text originally composed in Hittite. The subject of the text is the struggle of the ruling dynasty of Kuššara, later also the hometown of Ḫattušili I – starting with Piṭhana and continuing with his son Anitta – for supremacy in a large part of central Anatolia. As a result, after the conquest of several enemy cities including Kaneš/Neša and Ḫattuša, Anitta claims the title *rubā'um rabūm* (in the Hittite text equivalent to the title LUGAL.GAL “great king”), the typical title of Hittite kings ever since Ḫattušili I. Both Piṭhana and Anitta are also known from Assyrian texts of the colony period and are real figures in the history of Anatolia. Piṭhana’s conquest of Kaneš cannot be identified with the end of level Ib of the *kārum*, however, because he is attested as ruler of Kaneš in at least three documents from level Ib. His son follows after him and is also attested in Kaneš as well as in Amkuwa – a well known city in the later Hittite sources. Despite such an impressive lineage of more than 5, if not 6, rulers of Kaneš it is still impossible to write a proper history of this period. C. Michel has taken note of the fact that there is only one chronological link between level Ib and the history of Mesopotamia: in one of the level Ib texts a certain Nimar-Kube is mentioned and he is supposed to be identical with a Nim/wer-Kubi from Tall Leilan, a figure associated with the last ruler of Tall Leilan, Yakun-ašar. Samsu-iluna conquered Tall Leilan in his 23rd year, which corresponds to 1728 BC, while *Kārum* Kanesh level Ib must have been destroyed in a military conflict around 1720 (a date based on a new eponym list), which effectively marks the end of the written sources in Anatolia until the advent of the Hittite archives, a “dark-age” in the history of Anatolia. Interestingly, in the Hittite tradition, there seems to be a con-

4 See Veenhof 2003, 69–188; Veenhof 2008a, 147–182.

5 For a historical overview see Bryce 2005, 21–43.

nection between Anitta and a man called Anum-ḫirbe, known from a letter in Old Assyrian, written during the kingship of a certain Inar in Kaneš. And Inar is in all likelihood king of Kaneš before Piṭḫana, the father of Anitta, conquered the city. In light of the Mari texts, it looks like this particular Anum-ḫirbe controlled an increasingly large part of the political map of south-east Anatolia and Northern Syria during the 18th century including cities such as Zalpar or Haššu.

Obviously there was a tradition of “empire building”, of rather small “empires”, in the history of Anatolia and this pursuit of supremacy has had a more-or-less dramatic impact on the political landscape of Anatolia. But, as far as we know, none of these powers in Anatolia were strong enough to expand their political influence in the other direction from Anatolia into Northern Syria or Upper Mesopotamia. The first time this happened was with the founding of the Hittite kingdom in Anatolia.⁶

Generally the material in the form of written texts for early Hittite history is rather small, with one exception: for Ḫattušili I, one of the earliest or the earliest Hittite king (still a point of controversy⁷), we have a few fragments from political or historical texts and two nearly complete tablets of his annals as well as his so-called testament – both are Akkadian-Hittite bilinguals. The textual tradition is a little bit difficult: we have a tablet with the Akkadian version of his annals, perhaps from the old Hittite period and a Hittite version in a copy from the 13th century in addition to a few fragments from various copies, all late.⁸ It is unclear which version was the original. The Annals make it look as if Ḫattušili campaigned during six years of his reign only, yet because references are lacking, it is impossible to date these six years in the context of his kingship. Maybe the text is only a selection of the most important events or even a series of literary abstracts or excerpts from a much more comprehensive tradition. The consequences for the reconstruction of the historical events are obvious: it is difficult to get a clear picture of the sequence of campaigns and the chronological details.

And there are also difficulties with a second important document, his so-called testament,⁹ which is focused exclusively on the crisis within the royal family and the conflicts surrounding the designation of an heir to the throne, conflicts in which various family members were involved, but without any reference to other historical events or military activities. On the basis of the subscript of the tablet, we can assume that it was written shortly before the death of the ruling king, but the different episodes, which the text describes in many details, should date to different periods during the reign of Ḫattušili I.

Up to now it has remained difficult to determine how much the Hittites knew about the geographical and political situation in the Trans-Taurus world of Northern Syria and Upper

6 For different attempts to reconstruct the Hittite history prior to Ḫattušili I see Forlanini 2004a, 363–389; Forlanini 2004b, 249–269; Kryszat 2008, 156–189, 195–219.

7 See e.g. Beal 2003, 13–35; Forlanini 2010, 115–135.

8 In general de Martino 2003.

9 Beckman 2000, 79–81.

Mesopotamia in the times of the earliest known great kings like Ḫattušili and Muṣṣili. One of the main reasons for this is the profoundly laconic style of the so-called annals of Ḫattušili. Geographical names, mostly names of cities, but sometimes also of rivers or mountains, are often mentioned without any background information or context. The spellings sometimes differ significantly from other writing traditions, for example in the Old Assyrian or Mari texts. The chronological sequence and geographical distribution of the reported events is often unclear and even the reconstruction of the itinerary of the campaigns is tentative at best in most cases. At the same time the Hittite writing tradition in those early years shows a keen interest in different literary styles and textual formats not only in ritual and religious texts, but also in historiography. Some of these texts demonstrate the possibility of representing complex situations or actions in a discursive manner but – and we don't know why – the annals themselves did not make use of these techniques. We can be certain that Ḫattušili's activities in the struggle against the leading powers of Northern Syria were much more extensive than the meagre information in his annals actually reveals. And it is also difficult to believe that he only campaigns in six years of his reign.

On the basis of several small fragments containing information on the conflict between the Hittites and Hurrian troops in Northern Syria, it is fairly clear that there once existed a broad textual tradition concerning this historical situation, viz. the Syrian wars carried out by the Hittite kings at the dawn of Hittite history.¹⁰ Unfortunately, the extremely poor condition of these texts makes it impossible to reconstruct the development of these conflicts or the precise date of these events. They may belong to the context of the Syrian campaigns of Ḫattušili, but it is just as likely that they are related to the activities of Muṣṣili, who was fighting both the kingdom of Yamḥad and the Hurrian stronghold of Mittani or Hanigalbat. But even this scattered information speaks for the existence of the kingdom of Yamḥad as overlord over the majority of the region and we can also assume that there was some sort of coalition or cooperation between Yamḥad and the Hurrians. We will come back to this point later on.

Setting aside, for the moment, all these difficulties, we can still collect all the scattered information from the different sources so as to reconstruct the increasing geographical radius of the Hittites from Ḫattušili's first campaigns in the Trans-Taurus region to Muṣṣili's raid against Babylon: starting with Alalah and Zalpar, to Halab and Ebla, Emar and Karkemiš most of the well-known centres of the Old Babylonian world in Northern Syria do make an appearance in the Hittite texts. There are also some other names mentioned mostly in the annals of Ḫattušili I, but some of these names are difficult to identify or locate securely. In the following I focus only on a few of the major cities and centres in the east from a Hittite point of view and leave aside questions of the historical geography of Anatolia, largely because our knowledge for Anatolia is rather limited and with a few exceptions we are unable to locate most of the names mentioned.

10 See also de Martino 2002, 77–85.

In the case of the city named Zalpa, Zalpah or Zalwar the situation is rather complicated. There is of course one city named Zalpa in the Hittite text corpus that we can ignore for the moment – that is the northern Anatolian city Zalpa, perhaps to be identified with the ruins excavated at İkiztepe near the estuary of the Kızılırmak into the Black Sea.¹¹ But it is also clear that there is at least one, if not two other cities named Zalpa in the Hittite tradition, lying in a more south-eastern direction. The spelling of this name (or perhaps names) is somewhat different: We have Za-al-pa in the Hittite Version and Za-al-ba-ar in the Akkadian version of the Ḫattušili annals as the name of the one and same city, as well as the spelling Za-al-pa in the fragment KUB 36.99, a fragment also mentioning Anum-ḫirbi. Obviously the different spellings in the Akkadian and the Hittite versions of the annals of Ḫattušili make clear that in other Hittite documents Zalpa can be used for the city Zalbar. Zalbar is also attested in a number of texts from Mari in connection with its ruler Anum-Ḫirbi and it is also quite clear also that he is the same Anum-ḫirbe mentioned in the Hittite tradition and that his city Zalbar is not identical with the sites consistently spelled Zalpah in Mari, which lies near the Baliḫ river. And with this identification, it seems fairly clear to me that the name Za-al-pa-ar, attested in the Tikunani letter of Ḫattušili I as well as the Za-al-pa in the edict KBo 3.27, a text I will come back later on, stood for the same city of Anum-ḫirbe. And finally, but not relevant here, in the so-called Uršu-Text, we also have the name A-ru-a-ar, which could be interpreted as mistake for Za-ru-a-ar.

The Zalbar of Anum-ḫirbe – if it is indeed the Zalpa which is mentioned in the edict together with Haššu und Ḫalab, and if it is the same Zalpar, which seems to have never been under the control of Samsī-Addu – should be located beneath the Amanus mountain range in the West and far away from the Euphrates not like the other Zalpah. It seems rather likely that this Zalpar is identical with the city of Zalpa that Ḫattušili I claimed to have destroyed during his earlier Syrian Campaign in various different texts: his annals, the edict and, perhaps, in the Tikunani letter as well. It does not seem plausible to me that he reached the

11 It is a long ongoing discussion whether or not there is a connection between the destruction of Zalpa reported in the annals of Ḫattušili I and the half legendary-mythological text about the Queen of Kaniš and the city of Zalpa in the Black Sea range; see e.g. Beal 2003, 13–35, esp. 21–24. I myself find it very difficult to try to reconstruct *history* on the basis of – mostly fragmentary – texts, in which literary character, function, aim and/or relation to historical facts is rather unclear. Most recently M. Forlanini, who makes extensive use of well-known texts like the Zalpa tale, the Cannibal story and the Palace Chronicle, has written as follows: “Since a reassessment of early Hittite history is inevitably based on early Hittite ‘literature’, and since it is well known that these compositions were produced largely for political reasons, they must be studied with an aim to discovering the motivations of the authors.” (Forlanini 2010, 115–135, here 130) – but do we really know that these texts are composed “largely for political reasons” and is there some way of discerning “the motivations of the authors”? Sometimes we do not know at all who the author is, as for example in the case of the Anitta text. For example compare the nearly contradictory “readings” of the function of the “Palace Chronicle” according to Zorman 2004, 691–708, claiming Muršili I as author, and according to Forlanini 2009, 49–75, esp. 51, claiming Labarna I as author. The results of such reconstructions are interesting to read but rather hypothetical and sometimes purely speculative; moreover, the reconstruction of a northern and southern branch of the Hittite royal family spanning more than three centuries from around 1730 to 1425 (op. cit. 119f.) strikes me as simply untenable.

Baliḫ with his troops during the earlier phase of his Syrian campaigns, leaving powerful opponents undisturbed on his flanks. According to Marazzi and Forlanini, Tilmen Höyük may be a plausible candidate for the Zalpar of Anum-ḫirbe.¹²

In the second year reported in his annals, Ḫattušili I marched against Alalaḫ and destroyed the city; there is little doubt that this put an end to Alalaḫ VII.¹³ Continuing the campaign Ḫattušili I attacked Uršu but only managed to destroy the fields surrounding it, but not the city itself. In the following years Ḫattušili I does not enter into northern Syria according to his annals. During a campaign against the Arzawa¹⁴ lands in the west of Asia minor, the “Hurrian enemy” – perhaps a coalition between Halab and Hanigalbat or Mit-tani – attacked the Hittites in their homeland, thus isolating the Hittite king. But for unknown reasons the Hurrians did not finish off the Hittites and Ḫattušili I had the chance to rebuild his Anatolian empire in the ensuing years.¹⁵

Finally, he started a second campaign against strongholds on the other side of the Taurus mountain range and entered Northern Syria again, first facing the city of Haššu,¹⁶ perhaps to be located at Gaziantep.¹⁷ Haššu was an important partner of Halab, one of the traditional political centres in Northern Syria; normally, both cities are mentioned together in these early Hittite documents. Halab sent troops to support Haššu against the Hittite army, but in the end Ḫattušili slew these allied troops, marched directly against Ḫaššu and, ultimately, plundered and destroyed the city.

His next target was Hahhum, which was also plundered and destroyed by the Hittites. It is possible that this was the context in which Ḫattušili I received a silver chariot as a present from the king of Tikuna.¹⁸

12 See most recently Forlanini 2009, 49–75, esp. 3 and 12 f. with a short overview of the different possible identifications, but one has to keep in mind that none of the proposed models for the historical geography of the many place names in Northern Syria and the Euphrates region mentioned in Hittite texts is more than hypothetical at the present state of research. See also Miller 2001a, 65–101; Miller 2001b, 410–429 and more recently Durand 2006, 219–227; Archi 2008, 87–102.

13 von Dassow 2008, 5 f., 15 f. c.n. 34 f. with the relevant literature.

14 For the early contacts between the Hittites and Arzawa see Bryce 2003, 46–48.

15 On the presence of the Hurrians in Northern Syria in Old Babylonian times see Salvini 2000, 287–297. Richter 2004, 263–311.

16 Because of the nearly identical personal names of a king or several kings named Aniš-Ḫurbi of Ḫaššum, Anu-Ḫarwi of Zalwar and Anum-Ḫirbi of Mama some scholars see in Ḫaššum and Mama different names for one and the same place, see most recently Wilhelm 2008, 181–194, esp. 189 f. (contra) and Forlanini 2009, 60 n. 53 (pro), who still adheres to the identification of Ḫaššum as the Old Babylonian and Hittite name and Mam(m)a as the Old Assyrian name of the same city, to be located in the region of Maraš, because in his opinion, the fact that the unusual letter Kt k/k 4 uses the non-Old Assyrian variant Ḫaššu instead of Mam(m)a “proves” the identification. But another untypical letter to the same Unapše in Kaneš, Kt 91/k 539, mentions Mamma and not Ḫaššum; cf. Veenhof 2008a, 59 n. 235.

17 See Miller 2001b – and now Archi 2008, based on the evidence from Ebla.

18 The reading of the place name in both the Akkadian as well as the Hittite Version has been very controversial in the past, reaching from It-ku to Dim-ma-; nevertheless in the fragment KUB 23.20, 8, a text parallel to the Hittite version, we have a rather clear Ti-ku-na. On the background of the letter to the king of Tikunani, published a few years ago, the suggestion by Miller 2001b that the annals also mention here the king of Tikunanu sounds

In light of the new evidence from the Tikunani letter, the identification of Hahhum with Lidar Höyük (an idea supported by the old Assyrian attestation of a city named Hahhum lying on one of the main trading routes connecting Kaniš with Niḫrija)¹⁹ is still possible, but the region around Samsat is more plausible.²⁰ Niḫrija is also mentioned in the Tikunani letter, in which Ḫattušili I orders Tunip-Teššub of Tikunani to attack Hahhum from one direction, while the Hittites marched against the city from the other side.

That the geographical frame we can reconstruct from all these pieces of information is based on different sources is relatively clear. But the most interesting – and difficult – point is the localization of Tikunani itself. Ḫattušili I called Tunip-Teššub his servant: “Tikunani is my city, you are my servant, and your land is my land.” Can we accept the possibility that Ḫattušili I was able to establish political control over a region so far away from Anatolia? And why did Tunip-Teššub accept a Hittite king as his overlord? If indeed the king, who sent the silver chariot to Ḫattušili, as mentioned in the annals, is the Tunip-Teššub from Tikunani, then we can interpret this as a symbol of a political coalition, a “Zweckbündnis” with benefits for both sides. This seems to be an ideal situation for a formal treaty. In spite of this, however, the oldest treaty document that we know from the Hittite archives only dates to the end of the Old Hittite period, although there are a few small fragments, which could be somewhat older.

In my opinion, it is possible to recognize two different phases in the politics of the founder of the Old Hittite “Empire”. When Ḫattušili I, for the first time, entered the political sphere in Northern Syria and the political horizon of the traditional urban centres there, it looks as if the Hittites were only interested in booty. That means the Hittites were attacking cities that happened to lie along a given path – if they were fast enough, they had a chance to conquer the city, if not, they simply destroyed the hinterland surrounding the city and marched on, looking for another chance.

In the following year, after his first success, Ḫattušili would direct his attention to the far west against Arzawa. He was completely surprised by the reaction of the powers of Northern Syria. It looks as if Hattuša and the Hittites only survived by chance, however. But Ḫattušili I was obviously capable of learning from this experience. He re-established his control over central Anatolia and the adjacent areas, thus building a solid base for the renewal of Hittite military power. And when he entered Northern Syria a second time, he seems

plausible, even if there is still no proper explanation for the different writings. It may be that the Hittite scribe in the second half of the 13th century no longer knew the name Tikunani and misinterpreted the seldom used KU sign as a MA sign, copying out what he thought would make sense.

19 According to the information in the Old Assyrian texts, Hahhum was an important station on the way from Assur to Anatolia, located at the southern border of Anatolia near the Euphrates; see Veenhof 2008a, 194–200 and Veenhof 2008b, 3–29, esp. 7–11.

20 See now Forlanini 2004c, 405–426, esp. n. 60 and Forlanini 2006, 147–175 with the map on 170; for the identification with Lidar Höyük see Liverani 1988, 165–172; the very fragmentary cuneiform tablet, found at Lidar Höyük in the year 1986, is inconclusive in this respect, but G.G.W. Müller, who edited the fragment (*Eine Tontafel vom Lidar Höyük*, *AoF* 35, 2008, 312–317), dates it to the time of Ḫattušili I or Muršili I.

to have known much more about the political situation there and, just maybe, he followed a strategic plan in eliminating Halab, the centre of the kingdom of Yamḥad and the last remaining imperial power of the Old Babylonian world.²¹

Though Ḫattušili I did not achieve victory over Halab itself, he conquered some of the cities allied with it and permanently weakened the role of Halab as the dominant power in the region. We can assume that Hanigalbat / Mittani too was not able to refer the Hittites to the barriers. But the question we have to ask is the following: why is it – after centuries and for the first time – that a local Anatolian ruler was strong enough to cross the mountains in the other direction and confront the old political powers. Are there any hints as to why the Hittites under the rule of Ḫattušili were more successful than any of the other Anatolian rulers since the Old Assyrian merchants had entered Asia minor centuries before? What do we know about the political system of the Old Hittite kingdom? Treaties or instructions, the best sources for this kind of information, start later – but we do have a few documents focusing on the politics of these early years of Hittite history.

First, there is the fragment of an Old Hittite text, KBo 3.27, conventionally called an edict. In most of the preserved lines the text speaks about the problems of the Hittite king with his own family members, first of all with his son and daughter. His name is not mentioned, but it is clear nonetheless that Ḫattušili himself is meant; he banishes both of them and they have to live away from the court of the Hittite capital. The consequences for the supporters of these plans against the ruling king, which had been orchestrated by members of the royal family, were much harsher – their throats were cut and the dead bodies were hung at the palace gate. The addressee in the document is the heir to the throne, and we can assume that this is Muṣṣili, the young grandson, whom Ḫattušili had adopted in place of the son of his daughter. The text was obviously written in the last years or even months of Ḫattušili's reign because it is evident that Ḫattušili recognized that he wouldn't have enough time to reach his political and military aims in Northern Syria. Nevertheless, unwilling to abandon his plans to subjugate Halab, he formulated a strategical and addressed it to his successor:²²

The man of Zalpa ignored the word of the father – see now Zalpa. The man of Haššu ignored the word of the father – see now the Haššu. And then the man of Halap ignored the word of the father – Halap will perish!" – Halpa was the last surviving opponent for the Hittites.

Much more famous than this fragment is the text from Ḫattušili I that I mentioned earlier, which is known as his testament and is also addressed to the designated heir to the throne: contrary to the military successes abroad, the document reveals that the situation within the royal family was difficult for the ruling king and that his own sons had rebelled against him.

21 For the last kings of Halab and its poorly attested history see van Soldt 2000, 103–116 and Charpin 2004, 375–379.

22 See de Martino 1991, 55f.

The addressee of the text is the heir to the throne, his grandson Muršili, and it includes some ethical or moral advice for the young man. With his testament Ḫattušili tried to quell the crisis: he officially appointed Muršili as his successor. Ḫattušili gives him some instructions, which – it is hoped – will make the young and inexperienced man into a good ruler if he adheres to the words of his predecessor. The concrete mechanisms of rule are not mentioned, but the way the king should treat especially his sons or other members of the royal family as well as the functionaries and nobles is suggestive of the form of authoritarianism that Max Weber would call “patrimoniale Herrschaft”.

The authority of the ruler is based on his legitimation which, in turn, is based on his parentage and the recognition of him by the gods. An important text for the ideology of Hittite kingship, the Old Hittite composition KUB 29.1,²³ defines the king as a someone to whom the gods have entrusted *manijahḫai*- “rule” or “government” over the land, as *manijahḫtalla*- he is deputy or administrator of the storm god, the owner of the land, and of the Sun goddess, the mother of the land. The sons of the kings formed an oligarchy and acted as representatives of the king, deriving their authority from their direct relation to the ruler. Their loyalty to the ruler was the constitutive element of the autocracy. The central element forming an oligarchic structure depended on the family relationships. Relations of authority were represented through personal relations.²⁴

It may be difficult to reclaim such a religious text, based on the autochthonous Hattian traditions, as a real expression of the valid ideology of Hittite kingship²⁵ because none of the historical or political documents refer to these views.

Furthermore, in this document, a much debated institution of the Hittite state is mentioned for the first time: the *panku*, an assembly of the high functionaries of the Hittite state and members of the royal family. The CHD defines *panku* in this respect as “the totality of the king’s retinue as an advisory and admonitory body”. It is difficult to say which specific functions are assigned to this institution, an institution that the king has to consult in certain cases. There are no clear indications that the king’s authority was in any way limited by the *panku*, but we can assume that in these earlier years the *panku* may have been a factor meant to encourage continuity and stability.

In fact the transition from Ḫattušili to Muršili, despite the sometimes critical situation within the royal family, seems to have taken place without any further disturbance. Some

23 The tablet KUB 29.1 represents a late copy but the date of the composition is obviously much earlier, see most recently Beckman 2010, 71–91, esp. 72–74 and Appendix 452 Nr. 3.2; for the same topic see e.g. KUB 36.89 rev. 49 or IBoT 1.30, 3–6.

24 Cf. the much cited passage from the Telipinu proclamation (CTH 19.A: KBo 3.1+ II 40–42): “Seine Söhne, seine Brüder, angeheirateten Verwandten und die Mitglieder seines Clans (LÚ.MEŠ *ḫaššannaš-šaš*) und die Truppen sollen einig sein!” Watkins 2002, 168–177 called this a “formulaic expression of the unity and cohesion of different social groups under a just ruler” (169) and reads it as an reflex of the tri- or quadripartite organization of the early indo-European societies according to G. Dumézil.

25 For more texts with details valuable for the reconstruction of the Hittite ideology of kingship see Archi 1988, 5–31; from a slightly different viewpoint Beckman 2002, 15–21.

have argued that this was thanks to a regent who exercised royal authority, but we cannot be sure of this. We have only a small number of texts from the times of Muršili or even texts which refer to his reign, but it looks like the political situation in Hatti itself was peaceful and that Muršili may have been obliged to assert the authority of the Hittite kingdom in the territories that Hattušili had subjugated. Muršili continued the politics of his predecessor with campaigns against Yamḥad and its centre Halab; the Hittites needed to conquer Halab if they wanted to make a significant impact in the Northern Syria area. The sources for Muršili's military activities are very rare – but the results are rather clear. It is well known that Halab²⁶ was not the only Old Babylonian dynasty to which the Hittite king put an end. Whatever his reasons, he continued with his military campaigns and set off for Babylon the capital of the Mesopotamian world; in the words of the proclamation of Telipinu:

Subsequently he marched to Babylon and he destroyed Babylon, and defeated the Hurrian troops, and brought captives and possessions of Babylon to Hattusa. (CTH 19.A: KBo 3.1+ I 29–31)²⁷

Despite the fact that the Hittite sources fail to mention the name of the Babylonian king, it seems clear that Muršili put an end to the first dynasty of Babylonia in the times of Samsu-ditana as stated in the Babylonian Chronicle that in the time of Samsu-ditana, the Hittites marched against Akkad.²⁸

These successful campaigns of Muršili I did, however, become firmly entrenched in the memory of the Hittites as shown by a prayer of his namesake Muršili II. from the 14th century:

In the past, Hatti with the help of the Sun-goddess of Arinna, used to maul the surrounding lands like a lion. Moreover, Aleppo and Babylon which they destroyed, they took their gods – silver, gold and gods – of all the lands and they deposited it before the Sun-goddess of Arinna.²⁹

But what did the Hittites expect to achieve through these activities?³⁰ It seems rather implausible that Muršili had planned on exercising permanent control over the Babylonian

26 We know the list of kings of Aleppo from Abban, who reigned in the time of Samsu-iluna of Babylon, down to Hammu-rabi II of Halab – attested for example on seals from Alalah. But we do not know exactly how many years lie between the destruction of Alalah VII – if Hattušili I was responsible for the destruction during his earlier campaigns – and the destruction of Halab by Muršili; see Charpin 2004, 381 n.1992 and E. von Dassow 2008, 14 f. c.n. 32.

27 See also KBo 3.45, 12'ff. // KBo 22.7; cf. Klengel 1999, 62 n. 137 – dated to the reign of Hantili I; de Martino 2005, 225–230, esp. 230.

28 See Glassner 2004, No. 40. For the different non-Hittite sources see Gasche 1998, 6f. Strictly speaking, neither the Hittite, nor Babylonian sources explicitly state that Muršili's attack against Babylon was the definite end of the first Babylonian dynasty; see Charpin 2004, 382f.

29 CTH 376.A: KUB 24.3+ II 44–48; translation by Singer 2002, 53.

30 See Otten 1964, 115–124; Kühne 1978, 203–264, esp. 205; Haas 1993, 135–144; Klengel 1999, 65 c. n. 151.

empire. Moreover, the majority of Hittitologists believe that there were in fact no long-term gains from Muršili's conquests and that the main purpose had at least as much to do with his personal ambitions: to show that he was the rightful successor to the founder of the early Hittite empire. I am not so sure that this actually holds true.

We have only very scattered information for the situation after the return of Muršili to Hattusa and for the years following his death, murdered by his brother-in-law Ḫantili (CTH 19.A: KBo 3.1+ I 31–4). It looks as if Ḫantili had a rather long reign and was very active.³¹ During one of his Syrian campaigns he reached Karkemiš and the Euphrates, fighting a coalition of Hurrian troops.³² And a generation later we see Ammuna, the son of Ḫantili, fighting against Hahhum near the Euphrates and against Arzawa in the west of Asia minor.³³ In contrast to the broad swath of Hittite influence, the Telipinu Proclamation presents the reign of Ammuna as crisis years for the Hittite kingdom, followed by further bloodshed within the royal family; only once Telipinu came to power was he himself able to put an end to this decline and to the bloodshed, executing a policy of clemency even against the usurper and his helpers. I think we can assume that a good portion of this story is mere propaganda.

The fact is – despite the scanty information about the Hittite history between Ḫattušili I and Telipinu and despite the recurrent periods of instability within the royal family and the struggles for succession to the throne – nearly every Hittite king in this more than 100 year period was able to pass through the Taurus. Hittite military power continued to play an important role in southwest Anatolia and in Northern Syria, and until the formation of a powerful Hurrian state with a king in Waššukanni there was no real opponent to the Hittites in this area.

In the proclamation of Telipinu the *panku* still consists of a large group of functionaries – most of them active at court: the Palace Servants, the Cup-Bearers, the Table-Men and so on – including the personal guards of the king. But only a little while later, from the middle Hittite times on a new text genre appears, however, the so-called instructions: these are regulations for different groups of functionaries with military or administrative backgrounds. Just as this genre makes its appearance, the *panku* as a political or administrative institution seems to disappear from the textual documentation. In my opinion, that could reflect a general reorganisation of the administration of the Hittite state and its military structures. We hear, for example, about a special form of administration for the regional

31 Beckman 2001, 51–58.

32 Following the Telipinu proclamation Karkemiš stood under Hittite control and was obliged to send troops until the reign of Ḫantili I; see Klengel 1999, 70 c.n. 173, based on the translation by Hoffmann 1984, 21: CTH 19.A: KBo 3.1+ I 37f.: “(...) Kargami[š] begannen [dem Land Ḫatt]i² [keine] / [Truppen mehr (regelmäßig) zu geben].” For a different reconstruction of this passage see the translation by van den Hout 1997, 194–198: “[troops] they began to give”.

33 For the localization of the cities the Hittites lost in the reign of Ammuna following the Telipinu proclamation CTH 19.A: KBo 3.1+ II 1f. see Forlanini 2006, esp. 160f.

districts and the frontier areas. The beginning of conflict with the Kashkaens at the same time as their promulgation may be responsible for that fact that these reforms did not have any recognizable immediate effect. And again there were conflicts within the royal family and a usurper named Muwatalli placed himself on the throne, later murdered however by two members of the court.

For the time between Telipinu I and Tutkhaliya I we have no information at all on the political situation, but we should assume that through these reforms the Hittite kingdom was well prepared for the right moment. And this moment came when Tutkhaliya I entered Northern Syria again, fought the Hurrian Empire of Mittani – the supreme power at that time – and inaugurated the rise of the Hittite Empire instead. Only two generations later Suppiluliuma I defeated the Hurrians, pushing the Mittanian kingdom back over to the other side of the Euphrates. With the administrative organisation of the territory he had subjugated, with the founding of the kingdoms of Karkemiš and Halab, with his system of vassal treaties and other reforms and reorganisations, the Hittite Empire would become the dominant power for more than a century.

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II Political Landscapes – Antecedents in Upper Mesopotamia

Inherited Space – Third Millennium Political and Cultural Landscape

The third millennium political and cultural landscape of Syria and Upper Mesopotamia, territories where the state of Mittani ruled from the 16th century BC, was little known until just over thirty years ago. This was because very few centres had been excavated and, due to the scarcity of epigraphic and archaeological data, its history was hardly known. Beginning in the early eighties our knowledge increased enormously, thanks to the excavations in the numerous tells of Syrian Jazirah and to the discoveries of the Ebla, Tall Beydar and Tall Mozan written sources.¹

The geographical horizon of the Ebla texts is wide; they acquaint us with the political and cultural situation in the vast region of Syria and Upper Mesopotamia in the EDIIIb period of the third millennium.

* Università di Roma, La Sapienza. I would like to thank the organizers of this Topoi workshop for the wonderful way in which they organized the symposium. It was very important to have the opportunity to know all the texts of the participants before the workshop to prepare for the discussion, which was very fruitful and from which I learned a lot. The following abbreviations are used: ARET = Archivi Reali di Ebla. Testi; ARES = Archivi Reali di Ebla. Studi; MEE = Materiali Epigrafici di Ebla.

1 For these regions during the Akkadian period and that of the Third Dynasty of Ur see the exhaustive article by Sallaberger 2007, 417–456. I will just add some observations on Syria and Upper Mesopotamia during ED IIIb, especially with the data furnished by the Ebla texts. It must be noted that some historians consider the river Euphrates the more important of the two rivers in the history of ancient Mesopotamia. It was sometimes a barrier or a frontier, but mainly the great commercial route between Lower Mesopotamia, Syria and the Mediterranean. During the first years studying relations between the kingdom of Ebla and the important powers of the period, after Gelb outlined in many studies a Kiš civilization and its contacts with Ebla, some scholars (For the bibliography see ARES II, 328–330; Bonechi 1993, 159) discussed whether the city of Kiš, mentioned frequently in the Ebla texts, was the Mesopotamian one or not. For example, Pomponio supposed that the city of Kiš had to be closer to Ebla because it was impossible for the kingdom of Ebla to have direct relationships with Kiš in Mesopotamia; the city of Mari on the middle Euphrates would have stopped any attempt by Ebla to reach Kiš. This idea was based on a misunderstanding of the great importance of the region of Upper Mesopotamia in the Early Bronze IV period; the road to Kiš followed by the Eblaites was through Nagar, to the Tigris and then down to central Mesopotamia. But in the early eighties the great role and importance of Upper Mesopotamia at the time of the Ebla texts was not yet evident, even if it was known that centres like Assur and Niniveh (documented for that period mostly by archaeological data) had some importance in the third millennium. The Old Akkadian texts from Gasur, like those (older) of Šuruppak (Fara), were largely forgotten by scholars and only the discovery of the Ebla texts and the publication of the Abu Salābikh texts permitted a renewal of interest and renewed study. Now we have two reviews that bring us immediately to those regions: Amurru and Subartu.

1 Political landscape at the time of the Ebla archives

The reconstruction of the geographical horizon of the Eblaite kingdom (including its constituent, confederate and conquered space) in the period documented by the royal archives (XXIV cent. BC) is a forbidding and ambitious task, and study on this topic will still be “in progress” for a very long time.²

The geopolitical situation is documented by administrative texts and by some letters of foreign kings with whom the kings of Ebla had economic/political/diplomatic relations and by the text of an international treaty concerning Ebla's trade with the city of Abarsal, which had its own commercial network.³

Other evidence for the relations of the Eblaite kingdom with foreign countries and of long distance trade comes from archaeological sources.⁴

From all the texts it clearly emerges that the geographical horizon of the Eblaite kingdom was very similar to that of the Mittani kingdom. It included kingdoms far from Ebla, such as Kiš in central Mesopotamia, Ḫamazi east of the Tigris, Aššur (very probably) on the Tigris, Gasur (possibly) east of the Tigris, Nagar in Upper Mesopotamia, Mari on the Euphrates, Armi/Armanum on the Euphrates, possibly Tall Bazi-Banat⁵ and Harran to the north, in Anatolia. Some (a few) texts quote Mesopotamian Akšak and Adab too.

– Ḫamazi: The kingdom of Ḫamazi, already known thanks to its mention in the Sumerian King List, in a region probably East of the Tigris, is well documented by the text ARET XIII 3. From the text it is evident that equids-BAR.AN came from the region of Ḫa-

2 We are studying all the topics suggested when organizing this workshop. The constituent space of the Eblaite kingdom is now the subject of a European research project “Ebla *chora*”, with the aim of studying the villages and the towns under the direct control of Ebla, i.e. the towns where the kings and the viziers of Ebla had palaces; the towns of some sanctuaries of the god Adabal as Luban and Arugadu; the three sanctuaries of the goddess Išhara (very probably in the territory of the Eblaite kingdom); the towns visited in the ritual of renewal of royalty; some cities (probably Eblaite *emporium*, *karum*) such as Anmašu, Mabarra, Madu, Arugadu and others where textiles are often delivered. The treaty between Ebla and Abarsal (ARET XIII 5) shows that within its commercial network Ebla possessed and controlled many *karum*, or commercial bases. These centres, where foreign kings and various personages received textiles, need to be studied, but it is difficult to put cities and villages under the direct control of Ebla on a map because the location of almost all these cities remain unknown; furthermore, the 3rd millennium names of tells close to Tall Mardikh (Ebla) like Tall Afis and Tall Tuqan (Nirar?), inhabited at the time of the Ebla archives, are also unknown. For the Ebla *chora* see Biga 2013, 259–267. For the possible identification of Tall Tuqan with the capital of the kingdom of Nirar see Biga – Capomacchia 2012 (in print). To reconstruct the confederate space of the Ebla kingdom we are studying the Eblaite political and commercial network, see for example Biga 2008, 289–311; Biga (in print). For the conquered space, see some studies on the wars of Ebla, Biga 2003, 79–87; Archi – Biga 2003, 1–44; Biga 2008, 311–331; Biga 2010b, 39–57.

3 For these letters and the treaty see ARET XIII.

4 For the presence of lapislazuli from the area of Afganistan in Palace G of Ebla see Pinnock 1988, 107–110; Pinnock 2006, 347–357; for the relationships of the Eblaite kingdom with foreign countries including Egypt see Scandone Matthiae 1979, 33–43; Scandone Matthiae 1997, 415–427; Biga 2008, 289–334; Biga 2010a, 23–40; Biga 2010b, 39–57.

5 For the proposed identification of Tall Bazi-Banat with Armi of the Ebla texts see Otto 2006a, 1–26; Otto – Biga 2010, 481–494.

mazi to Ebla while precious woods from the Syrian region, such as boxwood, and objects made of wood were sent via Ebla.⁶

– Aššur: It has been shown that the city of Abarsal, which made a treaty with Ebla (ARET XIII 5), is not Assur, but must be located on a river, possibly the Euphrates or one of its affluents. Archaeological data prove that Aššur at the time of the Ebla archives was an important city. In the oldest Ebla texts there is no mention of toponyms that can be considered a written version of the name of the city of Aššur. But in one late text concerning Ebla's military campaign against Mari a reference to Aššur is quite possible. In text 75.G.2250, in which many cities are mentioned for the first time, textiles are registered as having been given to people of the city of *A-šu-ru₁₂^{ki}*, some of whom were going to Kiš, to people of Ebla going to *A-šu-ru₁₂^{ki}* and to people of Mari going to *A-šu-ru₁₂^{ki}*.⁷

It is possible that this is how the scribes of Ebla wrote the name of the city of Aššur.⁸ The geographical horizon of this text is vast and it includes cities probably far from Ebla and never mentioned before. All these people seem to want to meet the Eblaite vizier Ibbi-zikir in his march to Mari. It seems likely that the city of Ašuru is the city of Aššur, which at the end of the Early Bronze IV period was probably an important centre of commerce with Upper Mesopotamia and Syria.

– Gasur: If we consider *A-šu-ru₁₂^{ki}* as referring to Aššur we must also consider it possible that the city written in the Ebla texts as *Ga-su-lu^{ki}* or *Ga-su-ru₁₂^{ki}* is Gasur, later Nuzi.

A city written *Ga-šur_x* (HIXMAŠ)^{ki} is mentioned often in the Ebla texts from the beginning of the archives to the end and is probably a town in the region between Mari and Ebla, perhaps in the region of Emar, as Bonechi suggested.⁹

But the town written as *Ga-su-lu^{ki}* or *Ga-su-ru₁₂^{ki}* could be Gasur of the Old Akkadian period.

A town named *Ga-su-lu^{ki}* is mentioned in an “*en-ma*” text that will be published by P. Fronzaroli, 76.G.199+169+175 rev. II 7, a difficult but interesting text written by vizier Ibbi-zikir to the king. Ibbi-zikir reports to the king some war affairs in which Nagar, Kiš and Armi are involved. Ibbi-zikir has to pay for provisions for the soldiers (*guruš*). It is quite possible that we are dealing with one of Ebla's last military campaigns, the campaign against Armi, in which Nagar and Kiš were allied with Ebla.¹⁰ A mention of Gasur could be possible here.

Another text, 75.G.1945, written in the last years of the Ebla archives, records deliveries of sheep as offering to deities and for other purposes. At obv. XI 11–21: 6 udu kú kas₄-kas₄ *Na-gàr^{ki}* 6 udu kú kas₄-kas₄ - Kiš^{ki} 4 udu kú *Ga-su-ru₁₂^{ki}*; the sheep are given as food to messengers of Nagar, Kiš and to (messengers from?) Gasuru. In this context it is quite possible

6 Steinkeller 1998, 75–98 proposes to identify Ḥamazi with the capital of the region of Subartu.

7 See Archi – Biga 2003, 18 and n. 54.

8 A writing *A-šu-ur^{ki}* is attested in text 75.G.2278 of the same period, see Archi – Biga 2003, 18, n. 54.

9 See Bonechi 1993, 153.

10 See Otto – Biga 2010, 486.

that it refers to Gasur. At the end of the life of the Eblaite kingdom a relationship with Aššur and Gasur is therefore possible.

In texts dating from the last years of the life of Ebla we can find attestations of both Gasur (written *Ga-su-lu*^{ki} or *Ga-su-ru*₁₂^{ki} and *Ga-šur*_x (ḪI_xMAŠ^{ki}), although it is difficult (if not impossible) to accept that scribes used different spellings of the same city in the same period.

– Nagar: Close and frequent political, diplomatic and commercial relationships between the capital city Nagar (Tell Brak), the surrounding region and the kingdom of Ebla are documented throughout the duration of the royal archives.¹¹ From the Ebla texts it is possible to identify several names of cities under the political control of the major center of Nagar at the time of the Ebla royal archives; among them is Nabatium (Tell Beydar), identified by Sallaberger.¹² To give another example, in the annual account of metal 75.G.2464, dated to year 3 of Ibrum's tenure as vizier, some deliveries of quantities of silver to towns of the region of Nagar, including Nabatium, are mentioned.¹³ The silver is brought by the merchant Iram-malik; it is very probable that all these towns were part of the kingdom of Nagar following the itinerary of the merchant Iram-malik.¹⁴

The city of Nagar and Ḫamazi were undoubtedly two important centres for the trade in BAR.AN-equids, valuable and very expensive animals arriving from the Iranian region.¹⁵ Veterinary experts who cared for these animals came from Nagar too.¹⁶

Many centuries later, at the time of the kingdom of Mittani, the texts on caring for equids would be based on and use terminology relating to horses of an Indo-Iranian origin, thus demonstrating how both horses and the expertise used in domesticating and caring for them were imported from that region.

11 For an early study on the long-running relationships between Nagar and Ebla see Archi 1998, 1–15; Biga 1998, 17–22; see also Eidem et al. 2001, 101; of course, the complete history and evaluation of the relationships between Ebla and Nagar deserve a volume, and will be possible only when more complete documents are published. For Nagar see Oates et al. 1997; Oates et al. 2001.

12 Sallaberger – Ur 2004, 51–71.

13 75.G.2464 obv. III 23-IV 21: 5 ma-na bar₆: kù níg-ba Zú-gú-uš Na-gār^{ki} 30 (gín) bar₆: kù Ga-ga-ba-an^{ki} 30 (gín) bar₆: kù A-bù-li-um^{ki} 30 (gín) bar₆: kù Na-ba-ti-um^{ki} 30 (gín) bar₆: kù La-da₅-NE-um^{ki} 30 (gín) bar₆: kù Ba-sa-ḫi-um^{ki} 30 (gín) bar₆: kù Sum-à-NI-um^{ki} 30 (gín) bar₆: kù Ḫi-la-zi-um^{ki} 2 gín DILMUN bar₆: kù níg-kaskal Ḫr-am₆-ma-lik du-du Na-gār^{ki}, “5 mina of silver for Zuguš of Nagar, 30 shekels of silver for (a person of) the city of Gagaban, 30 shekels of silver for (a person of) the city of Abulium, 30 shekels of silver for (a person of) the city of Nabatium, 30 shekels of silver for (a person of) the city of Ladaneum, 30 shekels of silver for (a person of) the city of Basahium, 30 shekels of silver for (a person of) the city of Sumanium, 30 shekels of silver for (a person of) the city of Hilazium, 2 shekels of silver as provision for the trip to Iram-malik who went to Nagar”. It is quite probable that the merchant Iram-malik, well known from other texts, was sent by the Eblaite royal court for a commercial expedition to the region of Nagar. See also Archi 2005, 9–19; the text where the business of Iram-malik is mentioned is possibly to be dated to the first years of vizier Ibrum as G.2464.

14 In the Ebla texts there are certainly many itineraries followed by merchants and by the Eblaite army, but it remains difficult to attribute towns to different kingdoms and to identify them with modern tells.

15 For these animals, now extinct, see Weber 2008, 499–516; Weber 2009, 29–40; Biga 2009a, 41–56.

16 See Biga 2006, 85.

– Alalakh: The horizon of the Ebla kingdom included another city that had some importance at the time of Mittani kingdom; the city of Alalakh. Immediately after the death of Ibrium (or shortly before Ibrium died, but probably in the year of his death) there was a campaign against Alalakh which, subsequently, is mentioned more frequently in the texts. In conquering Alalakh, Ebla's political expansion reached the Mediterranean coast (even if Alalakh was not exactly on the coast).¹⁷

– Byblos: Byblos was an important city already closely related to Egypt from the 4th millennium BC and well documented at the time of the Mittani kingdom and in the Amarna period. It was the big harbour where Egyptians came to buy precious wood, especially cedar wood and other products from Syria and from the East, for which Syria was an important trade centre. Identification of the city of DULu, mentioned often in the Ebla texts, with Byblos was proposed by Pettinato and rejected later by some scholars.¹⁸ In the archaeological excavations in Byblos many important and precious objects of pharaohs of the 3rd, 4th, 5th and especially the 6th Dynasty were found. Pepi I, a contemporary of the last Eblaite king Išar-damu, is documented by several objects found in Byblos.¹⁹ It seems highly improbable that the kingdom of Ebla did not have any relationship with Byblos, which was surely very important at that time and not too far away. After studying the references to DULu in the Ebla texts I recently concluded that there is no better candidate for Byblos in the Ebla texts than DULu. A reading of the sign “DU” as gub is quite possible, and the absence of the dual (attested in the writing of Gubla in the second millennium) cannot be a big problem; in the Egyptian texts the name of Byblos is not a dual form. From DULu (and also from Dugurasu as we shall see) linen textiles are often sent to Ebla. There is not another centre (apart from Dugurasu) from which linen textiles are always sent to Ebla. In the texts recording incoming quantities of goods to Eblaite palace storerooms (the so called “mu-DU” texts) linen textiles and objects made with precious stones of different colours are regularly sent to Ebla by DULu and by Dugurasu.²⁰ An inter-dynastic marriage between Tamurdasinu, a niece of vizier Ibrium and a son of the king of DULu is documented in some texts.²¹

The recently discovered inscription of Iny, a functionary of three pharaohs of the 6th Dynasty, who was sent several times to Byblos and then to other Syrian cities to buy products such as lapis lazuli, silver, tin and bitumen, demonstrates once again the great importance of Byblos during the time of the Ebla archives (see below, p. 98–99).

For all these reasons it is not impossible to identify DULu with Byblos or with another town on the Syrian coast south of Byblos.

17 For the texts relating to this conquest see Biga 2010b, 47–48.

18 Pettinato 1983, 107–118; Pettinato 1986, 245–250. For the bibliography on DULu see ARES II, 210–211; Bonchi 1993, 11–12; in both the books an identification of DULu with Byblos is not excluded.

19 See Scandone Matthiae 1995, 37–48.

20 For some already published “mu-DU” texts registering the goods from DULu see for ex. MEE II, 1 rev. VII 6–11; MEE XII, 3 (29), (31), (32).

21 See ARET X 18, 74, 75, 94, 75.G.2329.

The relationships of the Ebla kingdom with Egypt

I would like to emphasize the importance of the relationships between Egypt and Syria that already existed in the third millennium BC, many centuries before the relationships of the Mittani empire with Egypt. Archaeological evidence from Ebla itself and from other Syrian cities such as Byblos demonstrates the extremely close relationships between these two regions. The name of Egypt or of an Egyptian city has not been identified with certainty in the Ebla texts, but there is one good candidate: the town/region of Dugurasu. In the Ebla texts enormous quantities of gold are mentioned and used for different purposes. The origin of this gold is still unknown. We know that from the second millennium the main supplier of gold to all the regions of the ancient Near East was Egypt. Furthermore, several Egyptian objects and vases and two important Egyptian objects found in the Royal Palace G of Ebla prove that contact existed between the two kingdoms.²² There is no reason to suppose that this contact did not also exist during the period of the 4th dynasty, when Pharaoh Chefredon ruled. The presence of small blocks of lapislazuli, certainly from Afghanistan, in the royal palace G of Ebla proves that Ebla was a commercial centre for this stone; from the Ebla texts it is evident that the lapislazuli arrived in Ebla via Mari, which was another important stop on the long route of lapislazuli from Afghanistan to Syria and then to Egypt. It is well known how precious and commonly used by the Egyptian court and by the pharaohs lapislazuli was. Several Ebla texts mention quantities of lapislazuli bought in Mari by Eblaite merchants and lapislazuli sent as a gift by Mari's royal court to the Ebla king and queen. Lapislazuli was brought to Ebla over several years by different stewards (heads of a diplomatic delegation), sent as ambassadors of the Mari king to the Eblaite court.²³ From Ebla the stone was taken to Byblos and to Egypt.

The Ebla texts prove that Ebla was also a commercial center for tin; there is evidence for tin being supplied to Ebla from Mari. The annual accounts of deliveries of metals mention large quantities of tin used (with copper) to produce different bronze objects, including many weapons.

The main sources of tin for Mesopotamia in the Bronze Age (and already in the third millennium) were in southwest Afghanistan.²⁴ Mari, according to the Ebla texts, is a provider of tin and lapislazuli to Ebla.

22 See Scandone Matthiae 1979, 33–43; Scandone Matthiae 1981, 99–127.

23 Archi 1999, 147–158.

24 See Lyonnet 2005, 191–200. It has been proved that there existed a route used to bring tin from Tagikistan and Uzbekistan to Mesopotamia and then Syria as early as the third millennium. The texts of Mari of the second millennium prove that the Tigris valley and especially the Diyala valley were the routes through which tin arrived to Mari from the East, from the Iranian region. The transport of tin from Susa to Mari is well documented by the Mari texts; Ešnunna and Elam were providers of tin (and lapislazuli), see Joannès 1991, 67–76; Charpin – Ziegler 2003, 212. See also Amiet 2007, 64–87; Bushmakina 2007, 178–241; Rossi Osmida 2007, 154–177.

There is now decisive proof of the existence of a direct trade relationship between Syria and Egypt at the time of the 6th Dynasty. In an Egyptian inscription recently assembled from different pieces belonging to collections in Japan, Spain and the US²⁵ there is the autobiography of Iny, an important Egyptian official who had a long life during the reigns of three pharaohs of the 6th Dynasty, including Pepi I and Pepi II. They all sent him to Byblos and then to a region that is certainly Syria to buy products from these regions. The products traded are: lapislazuli, tin, silver and bitumen. In the Ebla texts several gifts sent by the Eblaite court to different kingdoms are mentioned. Gifts of conspicuous quantities of lapislazuli, tin and silver from the Ebla court are sent only to the king of Dugurasu, a king who never went to Ebla to swear allegiance; from Dugurasu, objects of gold, linen textiles and quantities of precious stones of different colours and precious vases made of a stone that may be alabaster (the same objects that come from DUlu) are sent as a gift to the Ebla court.²⁶ The products sent by Ebla to Dugurasu are identical with the products the functionary Iny went to buy in Syria. DUlu and Dugurasu are often mentioned together. People from DUlu come to Ebla with the news that the journey of some merchants to Dugurasu has ended successfully. In Dugurasu several functionaries are described as having relationships with Eblaite merchants and their names are clearly not Semitic and can be better explained as Egyptian names.

The journey to Dugurasu is a long one, and the messengers of Ebla receive several textiles for the journey and several textiles for their shoes and for headbands. All these elements prove that identifying Dugurasu with an Egyptian region or with an Egyptian city is quite possible.²⁷

Pepi I was surely a contemporary of king Išar-damu of Ebla: the lid of an Egyptian alabaster vase marked with the cartouche of Pepi I and commemorating his Sed-festival was found in the royal palace G of Ebla. It was very probably sent by Pepi I to the last king of Ebla on occasion of the ritual of renewal of kingship celebrated by king Išar-damu and his queen Tabur-damu.²⁸

The close relationships between the Mittani kingdom and Egypt during the 2nd millennium were already in place one millennium before, during the EDIII b period, when the kingdom of Ebla had close and direct relationships, possibly with the pharaohs of the 4th Dynasty, but certainly with those of the 6th Dynasty, the contemporaries of the Eblaite kings at the time of the royal archives.

25 See Marcolin 2010, 43–69.

26 For a “mu-DU” from Dugurasu to Ebla see for example MEE XII, 3 (30).

27 Identification of Dugurasu with Tukriš was proposed, see Pettinato 1986, 284 (see also the comments in Bonechi 1993, 110) but the location of Tukriš east of Mesopotamia does not fit with the data of the Ebla texts; among several observations it would be very strange for the Ebla kingdom to send lapislazuli and tin to a kingdom which is closer than Ebla to the sources of these goods. See Biga, in press.

28 See Biga 2010a, 37–39.

2 The cultural landscape: some observations

Apparently, Hurrian names are not attested in the Ebla texts, but the name of the prince of Nagar, Ul-tum-ḪU.ḪU, who married the Eblaite princess Tagriš-damu in the last years of the Eblaite kingdom, remains difficult to explain as a Semitic name.²⁹

Some deities already attested in the Eblaite pantheon end up as part of the Hurrian pantheon. When Eblaite studies first began, these deities were considered proof that Hurrians were already present in the Ebla period. Then it was demonstrated that deities such as Adamma and Ašdabil,³⁰ well attested in the pantheon of the Mittani kingdom, were old deities of these regions, whose cult had survived for a long time before being absorbed into the Hurrian pantheon. Some scholars argued that Adamma and Ašdabil (with other divinities such as Kura, Adabal, Baliḫa, Ammarigu, etc.) were divinities of a substratum,³¹ but there is no evidence to support this statement. On the contrary, Adabal, a hypostasis of Adad, the great storm god of the Semitic region, is without doubt a Semitic god. And the fact that these deities are attested in the local calendar of Ebla (in which festivals for these deities are quoted) demonstrates in my opinion that these are in fact old Syrian deities.

The kings of the states who had close relationships with Ebla came to the temple of KURa to swear allegiance³² and from this it may be supposed that they were in some manner subordinate to Ebla. Otherwise, it would be difficult to understand why they traveled there. Why does the king of Ebla never swear allegiance to a king in another temple? We can be almost sure about this fact, because the king of Ebla never received fabrics for such a trip. Is KURa a divinity worshipped throughout at least northern Syria, or is he the dynastic divinity of a state more powerful than the others, which are, therefore, obliged to travel to Ebla?

It does not seem probable that Ebla was the strongest kingdom at the time; it was probably stronger than Emar, Ra'ak, Dub, Emar, Burman, Nirar, etc., but even the king of Mari comes to swear allegiance in the temple of KURa in Ebla, and Mari was, without doubt, stronger than Ebla.³³ KURa was venerated by the people of Mari, too.

The fact that KURa was venerated in many kingdoms including Harran and Nagar of Upper Mesopotamia and by the kings of Mari suggests he was probably a transnational divinity venerated in all of Syria and Upper Mesopotamia, or it is possible that the god KURa represents an epithet of a major divinity.

29 For the two texts dealing with the marriage see Biga 1998, 17–22; Biga 2009b/29, 37–40.

30 For the deities of Ebla see Pomponio – Xella 1997.

31 See Archi 1993, 10.

32 For the ceremony of swearing allegiance see Catagnoti 1997, III–137; Biga 2008, 302f.

33 In an annual account of metals 75.G.2464, dated to Ibrum 3 year as vizier, after the quotation of several gifts to people of Mari, in obv III 13–22: 50 gín DILMUN bar₆:kù nu₁₁-za 1 dub lú nam-ku₅ *Ib-la^{ki} wa Ma-ri^{ki} é dKU-ra* “50 shekels of silver for the decoration of the tablet of the oath of Ebla and Mari”.

Since the king of Nagar, perhaps unable to come to Ebla to renew his oath, goes, with other kings of the region, to the temple of Dagan in Tuttul, where vizier Ibrium arrives to represent the king of Ebla³⁴, we might suppose that KURa was an epithet of Dagan, who was venerated in Ebla.

However, in the text ARET XIII 19 (15)–(16), relating to the relationships of the king of the city of 'Adu with Mari and Ebla, an oath for a pact of peace before the god KURa and the god Adad is mentioned.

The young king of Dub swears his allegiance to Ebla once in the temple of Adad.³⁵ The text quotes the temple of the god Adad, but does not state the name of the town where the temple is, and it is possible that the oath took place in a temple of this god in Ebla itself. In fact, a temple of Adad in Ebla itself is mentioned in some texts, for example in 75.G.2507 obv. III 5–7: é d 'À-da lú SA.ZA_x^{ki}.

Several texts mention an offering of sheep to the god Adad, venerated in the temple of KURa in Ebla. For example, in the long text of offerings of sheep to different deities, the offering of two sheep to the god Adad venerated in the temple of KURa is registered; 75.G.1945 obv. I 15–20: 2 udu d 'À-da en nídba é dKU-ra. Several different deities are venerated in the temple of KURa and receive offerings; probably there were statues of these deities. It is improbable that KURa is an epithet of Adad; Adad was venerated in Aleppo and in Luban, Arugadu and Amadu as 'A₅-da-bal (Adad is lord). It seems difficult to admit so many hypostases of the god Adad.

The god Dagan gave to Sargon of Akkad Mari, Yarmuti and Ebla because he was the great god of the region from the Middle Euphrates to West Syria.

In conclusion it is possible that KURa is an epithet of one of the two principal gods of the region, Adad and Dagan. It is hard to decide which one, and it is difficult to interpret the name KURa. Possibly, with the end of the power of Ebla at the time of the archives the god KURa became less important and the other hypostasis increased in importance. This may explain the disappearance of the god KURa from the cult in the region.

The goddess Išhara³⁶, the most important feminine deity of the Eblaite pantheon, was later highly venerated in the Hurrian pantheon. The queen mother Dusigu and, after her death, the queen Taburdamu regularly went on pilgrimages to several sanctuaries of the goddess Išhara. They especially visited three sanctuaries regularly, in a kind of religious itinerary: Zuramu, MaNE and Uguas. In the town of MaNE³⁷ in the Ebla kingdom, probably

34 75.G.2465 (annual account of metals of the time of Vizier Ibrium, year 16) obv. V 17–VI 8: 20 ma-na bar₆; kù en Na-gàr^{ki} 5 ma-na bar₆; kù níg-ba en-en lú áš-ti en Na-gàr^{ki} DU.DU nam-ku, é dBE Du-du-lu^{ki}, “20 mina of silver for the king of Nagar, 5 mina of silver gift for the kings who with the king of Nagar went to swear (the oath) in the temple of the Lord of Tuttul (Dagan)”. For Dagan see also Otto 2006b, 242–268.

35 ARET I 11 (37). I would like to thank G. M. Schwartz, who reminded me of this text. At the time documented by the archives of Mari the oaths took place in temples of different deities and also in Adad temple, s. Charpin – Ziegler 2003, 101.

36 For Išhara see Prechel 1996, Pomponio – Xella 1997, 202–217.

37 See Ma'NE in Bonechi 1993, 227–228; ARES II, 379–381.

not far from the Euphrates and the kingdom of Emar, there was an important sanctuary of the goddess Išḫara. It is noteworthy that a place name NE-má^{ki} is documented in a legal document from Tall Beydar;³⁸ it is possibly the same town. Several historical, religious and linguistic problems concern the presence of this deity in the Eblaite pantheon and the opinions of scholars differ greatly.³⁹

The Ebla texts document an interdynastic marriage between the Eblaite princess Tagriš-damu with the son of the king of Nagar. The princess arrives in Nagar to become queen of the country with her personal staff and also brings to Nagar her habits, her culture and her divinities.⁴⁰

Centuries later, queen Puduḫepa introduced Hurrian deities into the Hittite region;⁴¹ it is quite probable that an Eblaite princess introduced Syrian deities into the region of Upper Mesopotamia.

A common Semitic calendar was used in a vast region including Ebla, Mari, Gasur, Abu Salābikh, Ešnunna during the EDIII period. This fact demonstrates beyond a doubt that these regions maintained close contacts and shared an extensive common cultural space. The scribes of Ebla dated all the texts of the small archives using the local calendar, but they dated all the texts of the great archive, dealing mostly with the external relationships of the Eblaite kingdom, with the month names of the common Semitic calendar.⁴² After the EDIII period this common Semitic calendar is not attested anymore.

3 The fall of Ebla

In reading all the texts relating to the late period of the life of the kingdom it becomes evident that Ebla had in its last years an enormous number of diplomatic relationships with many kingdoms. In some textile texts like 75.G.2247 (should be placed chronologically after Ibbi-zikir's 10th year as vizier) the vast geographical horizon is surprising. Even the tablets themselves are large; these are the biggest tablets regarding monthly deliveries of textiles, and they have many lists of cities, perhaps following some kind of itinerary.

Despite its many victorious wars and numerous allies, Ebla itself was conquered, sacked and burned.

There are different theories regarding the destruction of Ebla. Archi – Biga proposed attributing its destruction to Mari;⁴³ this proposition was accepted by some scholars, for

38 Ismail et al. 1996, 141, text 35 obv. V 2.

39 Pomponio – Xella 1997, 214–217.

40 For this marriage see Biga 1998, 17–22; Biga 2009b/29, 37–40 and n.1.

41 See Popko 1995, 97. 118. 151.

42 See Cohen 1993, 25–36; Biga 2001, 411f.

43 Archi – Biga 2003, 29–35.

example by Sallaberger⁴⁴ and rejected by others such as Matthiae⁴⁵ who sees Sargon of Akkad as responsible for the destruction of Ebla. Was Ebla destroyed by Sargon, by Mari, or by another enemy? It is hard to be certain about this. Probably the last campaign of Ebla, allied with Nagar, was against Armi. We know from many texts (ARET IX) that men from Armi were at Ebla, but we do not know why. Is it possible to suppose that there were internal disorders and troubles (caused by the men of Armi?) and an attack by Armi itself? Can it be argued that, with the destruction of the city and the end of the dynasty in power, the region was taken over by Armi/Armanum, a city that Naram-Sin claims in his inscription to have conquered?

The only certainties we have are: the military campaign of Ebla against Mari that probably weakened both kingdoms. Given that Vizier Ibbi-zikir went to war every year, it is obvious that the cost of these wars was high both in terms of weapons for the army and in terms of human life lost in battle, and perhaps as a result of leaving the city unprotected. Probably the conflict with Mari on the battlefields around Terqa was concluded without a real victor because Ibbi-zikir did not have the strength to reach and take Mari, and Mari had to sue for peace.

Ebla brought together an enormous group of allies against Mari. From the period of the military campaign against Mari and immediately after, the monthly accounts of deliveries of fabrics from Ebla to the closest allies mention dozens of toponyms, names of towns, small kingdoms under the political control of Ebla, but probably also other kingdoms, perhaps in the regions that the Eblaite army passed through.

Apparently many cities were interested in supporting Ebla against Mari.

As Matthiae pointed out, “the collapse of Ebla was not preceded by any economic, social, cultural, military, political crisis”.⁴⁶ For several reasons we cannot know exactly how many years after the military campaign against Mari Ebla itself collapsed.

The three or four year period that Archi and I accepted in our article in JCS 2003 is not certain. Too many monthly accounts of deliveries of fabrics still need to be completed with textual joins and to be put in chronological order. And we do not know if, for example, the city of Ebla was under siege for the years in which no tablets were written of course.

44 Sallaberger 2007, 421–423.

45 Matthiae 2009a, 60–62; see p. 60 and n. 52 for the three different positions. J.-M. Durand proposed another solution at a conference in Brussels and it will be published soon. See Matthiae 2009a, 43–62 for a complete discussion of all the aspects of the destruction of Ebla.

46 Matthiae 2009a, 61.

4 Syria and Upper Mesopotamia from the fall of Ebla to the end of EB IVB

The fall of Ebla and the quite radical destruction of the town, including the temples,⁴⁷ spelled the end of the Ebla dynasty's power. It is not yet known if a major centre replaced Ebla in the region, if such a centre existed. Surely the town of Aleppo increased in size and influence, and the temple of EB IVB was important, as was demonstrated by recent excavations.

According to Matthiae "The town was not apparently reconstructed immediately after, and particularly the ancient palace structures could not be recovered: the ruins of the Royal Palace G remained buried under the collapses of the fire, and there were no traces of reconstruction in the following period. The town of the following Early Bronze IVB period was probably smaller in size, perhaps mostly located in the north part of the ancient glorious settlement."⁴⁸

The archaeological data from the surveys in the region around Ebla, Tall Afis, Tall Tuqan show that there are numerous centers presenting a EB IV B phase and that there was no demographic crisis: possibly all the cities and villages quoted in the Ebla texts survived, urban life continued and no deurbanization took place.

Archaeological and philological evidence from Mari demonstrates that Ebla was conquered some years (around 10 years?) before Mari. Nagar, the major site of the Upper Khabur region, suffered destruction at the same time as Ebla and was then occupied by Naram-Sin, as proved by royal inscriptions and by archaeological data. Tall Beydar was partially abandoned at almost the same period as Ebla, but was reoccupied some decades later. The palace of Tuttul burned at around the same time as that of Ebla, but occupation at Tuttul continued. It is extremely difficult to synchronize all these destructive events. Tall Mozan (ancient Urkeš) in the Upper Khabur became an important urban center with a Hurrian ruling family⁴⁹. It is difficult to write the history of Syria and Upper Mesopotamia in EB IVB because of the scarcity of written sources from these regions. And contemporary administrative texts from Mesopotamia often have a limited horizon or refer to only a few major centres of this region. The royal inscriptions of course must be used with great caution when writing history.⁵⁰

From the archaeological data, taking a long view of 1500 years for a number of sites in Syria, it has been demonstrated⁵¹ that "in Northern Inland Syria the available evidence from

47 Matthiae 2009b, 677–730.

48 Matthiae 2009a, 59.

49 Buccellati 2002, 127–133; Salvini 1998, 99–115.

50 For the reconstruction of the history of Upper Mesopotamia and Syria of this period see the recent and important article of Sallaberger 2007, 417–456 with previous bibliography; see also Chavalas – Hayes 1992; for the region of Upper Mesopotamia see also Lyonnet 2009, 179–200. For the destruction of Nagar, Mari and Ebla see Lebeau 2012, 301–322.

51 Schwartz 2007, 49. 55.

ca. 3000–1500 BC suggests occupational continuity, with the exception of disjunctures in the late third Millennium and in the mid-second Millennium”. And for the region of the Upper Khabur it was noted that “the late EB is the major period of disjuncture” and “sites such as Tall Beydar, Leilan and Hamoukar suffer trauma by the end of the period”. But “there are also several sites without evidence of significant disruption in their EB-MB sequence”.

In conclusion, in the area of Syria and Upper Mesopotamia in the EB IV B (2300–2000), despite vicissitudes of prosperity and weakness, there probably was not a dramatic reduction in population or a significant level of deurbanization.

5 Conclusions

The archives of Ebla, the texts from Tall Beydar and Tall Mozan, are the only available sources for reconstructing the space in the middle of the third millennium (2500–2300 BC) later inherited by the Mittani kingdom. But the archives of Ebla especially allow us to reconstruct the political and cultural landscape of Syria and Upper Mesopotamia, territories where the state of Mittani ruled from the 16th century BC.

Several of the cities that will be important at the time of Mittani empire were already important cities at the time of the Eblaite kingdom, and their life continued despite vicissitudes of prosperity and weakness.

Some scholars used to consider Syria and Upper Mesopotamia as a periphery of Mesopotamia, but the archaeological and written evidence has made it increasingly clear that in the third millennium BC Syria and Upper Mesopotamia were in fact already a crossroad of important long trade routes coming from the Middle East and reaching the Mediterranean (Byblos) and Egypt. Cities such as Mari, Nagar, Ḥamazi, Ḥarran, Byblos, and Ebla were important stops along these commercial routes. Some of them continued to be important centres much later, at the time of Mittani empire. Other cities such as Karkemiš, Alalakh, Emar, Tall Bazi (possibly Armi of the Ebla period), Umm el-Marra (possibly Dub of the Ebla period), Assur and Gasur, attested also at the period of the Mittani kingdom, were already important at the time of Ebla.

Some texts from Tall Mozan (ancient Urkeš) prove that Hurrian people were already present at the time of the Ebla archives.

It is more difficult to write the history of Syria and Upper Mesopotamia in EB IVB (2300–2000 BC) because of the scarcity of written sources from these regions. And contemporary administrative texts from Mesopotamia often have a limited horizon or refer to only a few major centres of this region. The royal inscriptions must of course be used with great caution when writing history. But it has been shown archaeologically that urban culture continued in these regions and that there was no passage from urban culture to nomadism, as some scholars have argued.

In the area of Syria and Upper Mesopotamia in the EB IV B (2300–2000), despite vicissitudes of prosperity and weakness, there probably was not a dramatic reduction in population or a significant level of deurbanization.

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Central Anatolia in the Nineteenth and Eighteenth Centuries BC

At the beginning of the second millennium BC, certain sites in central Anatolia, such as Açıncıhöyük and Kültepe, underwent considerable changes and attracted Assyrian merchants from the southeast. These sites have been excavated for several decades now. They have yielded abundant findings and have allowed us to better understand the environment and material culture of the societies indigenous to the region. The earliest written sources discovered in Anatolia are foreign: they belong to the archives of merchants from Aššur, who settled at the city of Kaniš in the 19th and 18th centuries BC. Kaniš, whose modern name is Kültepe, is located nearby the modern city of Kayseri. Although these documents record the trade relations between Assyrians and Anatolians, they also indirectly document the political organization of Anatolia and its constituent states. To reconstruct the history of a region based primarily on foreign sources necessarily limits the results: we are restricted to those areas of activity, within which the Assyrian merchants operated, and even within these areas, we get a very partial and fragmentary account of events. For example, the Assyrians never named the rulers of the different city-states that they resided in. Fortunately, the few surviving archives belonging to Anatolians offer a more detailed account.

The period on which this article focuses is several centuries earlier than the founding of the Mittani state; in examining this era we would be hard pressed to learn, from the Anatolian point of view, something about the state's origins or the circumstances of its rise to power. This study aims instead to paint a picture of the history and organization of Anatolia in the first centuries of the second millennium BC. A synoptic description of the Anatolian region and its resources during this period will permit us to better understand the political and economic organization of the small Anatolian states and to better analyze the different conflicts that set them against one another during the period documented in the Old Assyrian archives. In the *kārum* of Kaniš, the Assyrians interacted regularly with Anatolians as well as other foreign merchants, including the Hurrians, who would later found the state of Mittani.

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1 Anatolia and its resources at the beginning of the second millenium

Hundreds of sites dating to the Bronze Age have been excavated in Anatolia. Nevertheless, only three sites from the Middle Bronze are known by their ancient names: Kültepe, in ancient times called Kaniš, Boğazköy, formerly Hattuš(a), and Alışar, which seems to have once been known as Amkuwa.¹ Although some sites, like Kültepe, have been excavated for over half a century, there have been, until now, very few attempts at a scholarly synthesis of the findings. Our understanding of material culture, society, and the political organization of sites in Anatolia regularly improves, as does our knowledge of the chronological context of archaeological finds. The development of different sites and their importance was directly linked to their geographic location.

1.1 The Anatolian space

Anatolia consists of a central plateau with clay deposits that was shaped by numerous volcanic formations and lacustrine depressions, bordered to the north and south by mountain ranges. The Asian peninsula of Turkey encompasses several geographic zones, all of which were more or less populated during the Middle Bronze Age in the first half of the second millennium BC.²

To the north of the Anatolian plateau, the region bordering the Black Sea, there are large areas covered by woods and rich deposits of copper and silver, especially in the Pontic chain to the east. In this area there are relatively few urban centers that date to the Bronze Age, with the exception of the plain between the Kızılırmak and the Yeşilirmak.³ In the West, there are also only a few major sites inhabited during this time period (see below).

The Anatolian plateau takes up the major part of the Asian peninsula of Turkey. The Kızılırmak flows through its central part, which was densely populated during the Bronze Age; the river serves as a natural border. The most important sites of the Middle Bronze age were located in the fertile plane nestled along river bends. To the west of the Kızılırmak, the soil is drier and there are fewer inhabited sites. To the southwest, in the irrigated plane of Konya there were also fewer settlements, mainly inhabited by farmers and shepherds. To the southeast of the Kızılırmak, in the plane of Kayseri, Kültepe was the most important among a number of settlements that were occupied during the Middle Bronze age.⁴

The long range of the Taurus Mountains also forms a natural border between the Anatolian plateau and Cilicia to the south, as well as the Arab plateau to the southeast.⁵ The

1 Michel 2008a.

2 Yakar 2000.

3 Dönmez – Beyazıt 2008.

4 Yakar 2000; Sagona – Zimansky 2009, 225–252; Barjamovic 2011.

5 Marro 2004.

plains of Göksun, Elazığ and Elbistan, irrigated by numerous waterways, contain a concentration of smaller Bronze Age sites; these villages, inhabited by farmers, seem to have been oriented toward the Euphrates rather than toward Central Anatolia. The Assyrian caravans coming from Mesopotamia had to cross the Taurus at one of the few mountain passes, but they also had to travel through very densely forested land. To the southeast of the Taurus, the Euphrates constituted an additional natural border.⁶ The cities situated on the other side of the river, although strictly speaking not a part of Anatolia, nevertheless participated in the Assyrian trade network, even though the major commercial exchanges only occurred once the Euphrates had been crossed.

1.2 Transportation in Anatolia

The Anatolian plateau itself did not pose any major problems for the transportation of persons and goods; the areas close to the mountain ranges and rivers, however, were difficult to access and to cross. The waterways, depending on their size, depth, and the rapidity of their currents, were either crossed at a ford or with the help of a ferry or a bridge; one group of texts records the costs of using various river crossings.⁷ Guarded toll bridges spanned smaller streams, while travelers who crossed the Euphrates had to use ferries or small boats that were put at their disposal.⁸ Travelling through the arid steppes and mountain ranges posed other problems that were potentially dangerous to men, animals and the goods they were transporting, and thus certain precautions had to be taken. Accounts recording the employment of carriers and the renting of beasts of burden indicate that crossing the mountains was costly and difficult. Additional men had to be hired to protect against the bands of thieves that plied their trade in the mountains, stealing from and sometimes killing the passing merchants.⁹ The trade agreements concluded between the Anatolian rulers and the Assyrians defined waterways and mountains as dangerous areas. A treaty signed between the Assyrians and the Anatolian authorities of Hahhum, a city on the Euphrates, addresses losses on the river itself, in the surrounding mountains, and anywhere within the lands of the local sovereign.¹⁰ Crossing the Anti-Taurus and Taurus was especially perilous for caravans coming from Aššur.¹¹

The Anatolian climate, continental in nature, featured hot and dry summers contrasted with cold winters and heavy drifts of snow until well into springtime. These climatic variations impacted the movement of caravans, imposing a hiatus on long-distance com-

6 Veenhof 2008b; Barjamovic 2011.

7 Veenhof 2006 et 2008b; Michel 2008b.

8 Veenhof 2008b.

9 Michel 2008b, 372f., 380–384.

10 Kt 00/k 10:ii 11–18, *kārum* Ib, cf. Veenhof 2008a, 194–200.

11 Forlanini 2006.

mercial activity in winter, as the routes through the mountains became inaccessible due to snow and storms. In fact, allusions to interruptions in travel due to freezing temperatures and closed roads during the cold season are common in the surviving documentation. Even though forests covered much of the Anatolian plateau, merchants were forced to travel through desert-like areas during the dry season and therefore had to choose their itineraries based on sources of water and places where they could re-provision. The journey was divided into several stages, with breaks at inns, where people and animals alike could rest. Caravan accounts included fees for inns, totaling several shekels of silver or tin or several minas of copper; other expenses included fodder and rent for stables for the donkeys as well as lodging and food for the merchants. A salary was sometimes added for the guards.¹² Thus, the regular passage of large caravans played an important role in local economies.

1.3 The resources of the Anatolian states

The Anatolian plateau was largely covered by forests, but a sizable portion of the region consisted of arable land and pastures. Farming and breeding livestock were the principle activities of the small Anatolian states. The past several years have seen an increase in archaeobotanical studies for various excavations of smaller sites in Anatolia, yet such studies are beginning for larger cities like Kültepe and Achemhöyük. Research carried out on the botanical remains at Kaman Kalehöyük, however, reveals the presence of no less than half a dozen varieties of grain. According to the textual evidence, the majority of non-irrigated fields were devoted to the cultivation of barley and wheat. The fields were alternately cultivated and allowed to lay fallow.¹³ The many loan contracts that were made out to the Anatolians provide a good documentation of the ancient agricultural calendar.¹⁴ Wheat was sown in autumn (*erāšum*, “to work” and “to sow”), barley in the spring. Once the grain had ripened (*kubur uttītim*, from July to October), the grain was harvested with sickles (*šibit nig-gallim*, *ešādum* “to harvest”), after which it was taken to the threshing floor (*adrum*). Finally, the grain was sold in sacks at the market, or stored in large jars in the palace warehouses. The Anatolians also cultivated sesame in order to make oil for food, perfume, and light.

In this period, land was owned either by farmers or by palace officials. Parts of the cultivated land were under the direct control of the palace itself. The urban population and the merchants of the *kārum*, meanwhile, lived on the surplus agricultural goods sold at the markets.¹⁵ This surplus also provided the funds for hiring men and animals for the caravans and paid for their re-provisioning at the roadside inns across the plateau. Certain fields

¹² Michel 2008b, 377, n. 25, text TC 3 165.

¹³ Michel 1997; Fairbairn 2006; Fairbairn et al. 2007; Dercksen 2008b.

¹⁴ Michel 1997; Dercksen 2008b; Veenhof 2008a, 234–245.

¹⁵ Dercksen 2008a.

were tied to the palace by a service obligation (*tuzinnum*) whereas other domains (*ubādinnum*) were given to high officials by the king.¹⁶ Landowners were required to give a portion of their harvests to the palace as a kind of tax. According to Yakar (1998), the communities that were established on the semi-arid plateau in the area around Kaniš had a largely self-sufficient agricultural economy. Nevertheless, the poorest farmers produced barely enough food for survival; they were often obliged to borrow grain in order to get by until the next harvest. They frequently mortgaged their lands against these debts.

Irrigated farmland was used by both the palace and individual landowners for the cultivation of fruit trees, vegetables, lentils, chickpeas, onions, leeks, aromatic plants, spices and animal fodder (in particular, vetch).¹⁷ Commoners also paid a fee for the use of irrigated water.¹⁸ Olive picking took place in autumn (*serdum*). To the north of Kaniš, grapes were also cultivated; the harvest took place in September (*qitip kerānim*).

Sheep and goat were allowed to graze the steppe and fallow fields. These herds were usually owned by the palace and were raised for meat, fat, milk, and wool. The sheep were plucked in the spring and the palace sold their wool in large quantities to the Assyrian merchants, who played the role of intermediaries in its trade;¹⁹ the wool produced at Mamma and Luhusaddia was particularly valued.²⁰ The palace also raised mules, horses, oxen and dogs.²¹ Excavations of the kitchens at the palace of Aĉemhöyük have revealed the remains of sheep and goats, but also of oxen and pigs.²² Commoners, meanwhile, often raised a few sheep and pigs in their backyards.²³

It was not, however, Anatolia's agricultural production that attracted the Assyrian merchants but rather its richness in minerals.²⁴ The Anatolians possessed great quantities of copper, but they depended on Assyrian imports for the supply of tin, which was used to produce the highly valued bronze. The Assyrians, meanwhile, purchased gold and silver from the Anatolians to take home with them. Silver was extracted in the Taurus Mountains in the region to the south of Niğde; it was also imported from the west, and the city of Buruṣhatum was one of its major markets. Along with copper, silver was one of the principal forms of payment for small expenditures. One part of the silver acquired by the Assyrians was converted to gold at a rate of six to eight shekels of silver for one shekel of gold. The gold came from the west and southwest of Anatolia, as well as from the mountains to the northeast of Malatya.

¹⁶ Dercksen 2004b.

¹⁷ Michel 1997; Dercksen 2008b; Sturm 2008.

¹⁸ Kt o/k 52:10–11, Albayrak 2001, 308. 311.

¹⁹ Dercksen 2004a, 181–190.

²⁰ Michel 2006a; Michel – Veenhof 2010; Lassen 2010.

²¹ Michel 2004; Dercksen 2008a; Kt g/t 35, cf. Balkan 1957 and Michel 2001, no. 62.

²² Nicola – Glew 1999.

²³ Michel 1997; Michel 2006b.

²⁴ Dercksen 2005.

Anatolia was a major producer of copper; the most heavily exploited mines could be found along the coast of the Black Sea and in the region of Ergani.²⁵ Durhumit was the principal market for copper.²⁶ Copper was a cheap metal, and it served as a currency for the purchase of common goods. When it was alloyed with the tin that was imported by the Assyrians it was used to manufacture bronze. The Assyrians purchased copper at Durhumit, refined it and traded it for silver at the markets in Buruṣhattum, Wahšušana and Kaniš. Bronze was used for the manufacture of tools, weapons, plateware and many other objects.²⁷ Metallurgical workshops discovered at Kültepe contained many moulds for bronze tools, weapons and ingots.²⁸

2 The Anatolian states: organization and relations

The textual record offers little information about the political structure, size, and economic importance of the different Anatolian centers. The rare allusions to the political sphere principally concern the Anatolian elite – for the most part, princes and palace officials involved in negotiations with the Assyrians. We can also glean information from the sources regarding events that interrupted trade activities, such as conflicts, rebellions, or the absence of the ruler. The latter could be either due to the king being on a journey or the throne being vacant. The growing number of publications of tablets from Kaniš in the last two decades has made it increasingly possible to reconstruct more and more fragments of Anatolian history. We must nevertheless recall that the surviving sources are primarily Assyrian and therefore only concern the regions within Anatolia that were visited by the Assyrian merchants.

2.1 The zone of Assyrian activity in Asia Minor

At the beginning of the second millennium BC, a dozen or so localities in central Anatolia underwent a process of rapid development: they were generally situated along the principal axes of circulation, and included Kültepe, Ačemhöyük, Karahöyük Konya and Boğazköy. Built on the ruins of Early Bronze Age settlements, these sites were fortified and now included an upper part with a palace and temples – signalling the development of monumental architecture. The evolution of these cities seems to have been accompanied by profound political, economic and social changes. Indeed, it is at this moment that they – having pre-

25 Dercksen 1996.

26 Michel 1991.

27 Özgüç 1986 and 2003; Dercksen 1996, 76–80; Sturm 2001; Michel 2008c.

28 Özgüç 1986, 39–51; Müller-Karpe 1994, 49–66.

vously been nothing more than the capitals of very small territorial states – began to attract the interest of Assyrian merchants, who established themselves in *kārum* (or *wabartum*), located in the lower part of the cities.²⁹

The sites in the heartland of the Anatolian plateau are the main sources for our knowledge of Anatolian chronology: they have furnished us with a highly precise stratigraphy as well as numerous texts, seals and seal impressions. The Assyrians chose the site at Kültepe as the center of their commercial operations in Asia Minor, which explains the more than 17,000 cuneiform texts discovered there over the last sixty years. Most of them were excavated in the lower city, which included living quarters for both Anatolian and Assyrian merchants, the central office of the *kārum* (*bēt kārim*, which has yet to be excavated), and a sanctuary for the god Aššur. The citadel site reveals 18 strata of human occupation, ranging from the Early Bronze Age to the Roman period (levels 10–6 correspond to the Middle Bronze Age); the lower city's stratigraphy only covers the Middle Bronze Age (IV–I). Levels IV and III, which date to the end of the third millennium BC and cover a considerable surface area, have not furnished us with any written sources. Level II, which corresponds to the principal phase of Assyrian settlement in the area, was used from the last decades of the 20th century BC until 1835 BC. Most of the archives that have been excavated thus far date to this period. The texts allow us to estimate that approximately 500 Assyrians lived in the lower city. The quarter partially burned down but it does not seem to have been abandoned, as level Ib shows signs of occupation two or three years after the end of level II.³⁰ This second period of Assyrian inhabitation lasted until the end of the 18th century. Trade with Assyria slowed down during this period, and the written sources exhibit few different sign forms and spellings.³¹ The merchant quarters in Alişar (Amkuwa) and Boğazköy (Hattuş), which have each yielded less than one hundred tablets in excavations, are contemporaneous with the level Ib at Kaniš.³² Level Ia of Kaniš, meanwhile, corresponds to a phase of Assyrian withdrawal; no written documents have been unearthed from this period, although the discovery of ceramics imported from Syria testifies to the ongoing exchanges occurring at this time between Anatolia and Upper Mesopotamia.³³

The trade documented in the detailed archives of the merchants at Kaniš dealt mostly with metals and textiles – neither of which has left much of a trace in the archaeological record. On the other hand, the rich findings of furniture discovered at Kaniš and other sites on the Anatolian plateau gives us an excellent idea of the material culture of the Bronze Age in the region. Ceramics, seals, and impressions of seals allow us to delimit the areas, in which the Assyrian merchants were active. This area can be specifically defined by the toponyms mentioned in the Assyrian archives. For example, to the Southwest, the site of Karahöyük

29 Yakar 1998; Sagona – Zimanski 2009.

30 Günbattı 2008.

31 Kryszat 2008a.

32 Dercksen 2001.

33 Emre 1995; Emre 1999.

Konya produced a considerable number of seal impressions showing that this site was part of the trade network that was initiated by the Assyrians.³⁴ According to the texts, Buruṣhattum and Šaladuwar were the two most western cities in the Assyrian trade network. Buruṣhattum can no longer be identified with Aĉemhöyük,³⁵ but Karahöyük Konya is a possible candidate for its modern location, although Barjamovic (2011) situates it further to the west. Šaladuwar was probably situated to the northwest of the Salt Lake, perhaps in the bend formed by the Sakarya Nehri. Wahšušana and Nenašša were also located to the West of Kızılırmak. The cities of Ulama and Ušša, which were situated in the southern part of the plateau, also belonged to the trade network. To the north, the Assyrians traveled as far as Zalpa (Zalpuwa), close to the Black Sea. In the southeast, we assume that they never went further than Hahhum (Samsat), a city on the Euphrates, because the city of Karkemiš is not mentioned in the texts.

2.2 The political organization of Anatolia

At the beginning of the second millennium BC, central Anatolia was divided into multiple political centers, ranging in size from small, fortified city-states to true territorial states with a capital and surrounding villages. The archives of Kaniš mention about 500 toponyms. Unfortunately, their importance remains obscure in most cases. The Assyrians doubtlessly took up residence in the largest and most economically developed of the cities. The economic resources of these states varied considerably depending upon their geographic location: certain regions played a crucial role in the silver trade (Buruṣhattum to the west), others in the copper trade (Durhumit to the north) and still others in wool (Mamma and Luhuṣaddia to the south).³⁶

The Assyrian terminology for Anatolian political entities is not at all precise. The term *mātum*, “country”, logically refers to the territory of a city-state. But certain Assyrian marriage contracts make a distinction between *ālum*, “the City” (meaning Aššur), and *mātum*, “the Country”, which corresponds in this case to Central Anatolia.³⁷ The archives dating to Level II of the *kārum* at Kaniš (19th century BC) mention the territories of Buruṣhattum, Kaniš, Luhuṣaddia, Wahšušana and Zalpa to the north. The region situated along the interior of the Kızılırmak bend – the “Hattum” – contained several important cities, including Amkuwa, Hattuš, Tawinia, and Tuhpia. A marriage contract summarizing the area of activity for one Assyrian merchant references Kaniš, Buruṣhattum and the Hattum.³⁸

34 Alp 1968.

35 Dercksen 2001, 60f.; Miller 2001; Michel 2002.

36 Garelli 1989; Michel 1991; Michel – Veenhof 2010.

37 ICK 1 3.

38 Prag I 490.

The Assyrians first established themselves in Kaniš, the capital of a territorial state, which became their administrative center for the entire period. There were about ten villages belonging to the kingdom of Kaniš (including Dadasun, Hailawakuwa, Meliliya, Talwahšušara, Tataša, Tiwara and Utiša³⁹). Next, the Assyrians slowly settled the region between Upper Mesopotamia and Anatolia, and they created *kārum*s in the cities of Eluhut, Nihria, Hahhum, Uršu, Southern Zalpa, Timilkia, Tegarama, and Šalahšuwa. Then they expanded their zone of activity towards the north (Hattuš, Šimala, Šinahutum, Tawinia, Tišmurna, Tuhpia, Durhumit, Šamuha), and to the west (Wahšušana and Šaladuwar) and towards the southwest (Nenašša, Burušhattum⁴⁰). They also established themselves in about fifteen *wabartums* – a trading post under the authority of the nearest *kārum* – at Amkuwa, Hanaknak, Hurrama, Karahna, Kuburnat, Kuššara, Mamma, Šamuha, Šuppilulia, Ulama, Upē, Ušša, Wašhania, Northern Zalpa and Zimishuna. During the period of the *kārum* II, the Assyrians settled in more than forty localities.

In the next phase, which corresponds to level Ib of the *kārum* at Kaniš (18th century BC), some states increased in size and importance, while others disappeared entirely from the Assyrian zone of activity. Kaniš was among the largest with more than twenty villages in its territory, as recorded in a list of palace personnel discovered in the remains of the citadel.⁴¹ The kingdom of Mamma also seems to have had vassals, according to a letter sent by its king.⁴² Burušhattum in the west disappeared entirely from the documentation in this period, while Wahšušana became insignificant. The number of cities with an Assyrian merchant “colony” also diminished: the texts mention only ten *kārum*s (Durhumit, Eluhhut, Kaniš, Kuburnat, Šaladuwar, Šuppilulia, Tawinia, Tegarama, Wahšušana and Wašhania) and five *wabartums* (Amkuwa, Hurrama[?], Mamma, Šamuha, Timilkia[?]).

In spite of all this information, it is impossible to delineate the frontiers of the kingdom of Kaniš or its neighbors. The territory of Kaniš bordered to the southeast the territories of Luhusaddia, Hurrama, and Šalahšuwa. Contracts for the sale of slaves seem to suggest that the major political frontier was the Euphrates.⁴³

2.3 The internal political organization of Anatolian states: the example of Kaniš

Each city-state was ruled by a dynasty. The rulers were alternately called *rubā’um*, “prince”, and *rubātum*, “princess”, but were also often known just by a nisba (“Man of GN”: Hattušaīum, Nenaššaīum, Wahšušanaīum, Timilkiaīum and Tipurziaīum). The Akkadian term

39 Forlanini 1992; Dercksen 2008b.

40 Veenhof 2008a, 164–167.

41 Kt g/t 36 and Kt g/t 42 + Kt z/t II, Bilgiç 1964; Günbattu 1987; Forlanini 1992, 175f.; Dercksen 2004b; Dercksen 2008b.

42 Balkan 1957; Michel 2001, n. 62.

43 Hecker 1997.

šarrum “king” was used in the plural as *šarrānum* during the *kārum* Ib to designate petty kings, vassals of the princes of Mamma and Kaniš. The Sumerian equivalent, LUGAL, was used for the term *rubā’um* in the expression LUGAL GAL, meaning “Great Prince” (the equivalent of *rubā’um rabi’um*). Certain kingdoms were governed by a princely couple,⁴⁴ others by a princess ruling alone.⁴⁵ In these latter cases, we are not certain whether the woman in question was a widow or the daughter of a ruler who died without a male heir.

In the *kārum* II period, we know of fifteen Anatolian states that were governed by a “prince”: Amkuwa, Burušhattum, Durhumit, Hattuš, Hurrama, Kaniš, Kuburnat, Luhusaddia, Mamma, Nenašša, Šinahutum, Tawinia, Timilkia, Tuhpia, Waḥšušana, Wašhanian. At Burušhattum, the local ruler was sometimes called “Great Prince”, *rubā’um rabi’um* and must have had vassals.

Anatolian legal documents in the *kārum* Ib period give the name of a local ruler and of his *rabi simmiltim* (literally “chief of the stairs”), a title which sometimes corresponds to that of crown prince. Coming from Kaniš, these sources are primarily concerned with the local dynasty⁴⁶ (see below). Princes are also referenced at other Anatolian sites – at Amkuwa, Kaniš, Luhusaddia, Mamma, Šalahšuwa and Tawinia – but we do not know their names.

The ruler exercised power from his palace. It was the center of the Anatolian administration and housed many hundreds of people, including high officials in charge of different sectors, workers, and artisans. The building called the “palace of Waršama”, dating from layer Ib at Kaniš, occupied more than a hectare.⁴⁷ Old Assyrian sources dating to the level II period mention palaces at fifteen different locations; in the following period, only the palace at Šalahšuwa is mentioned. The fifty surviving titles we have for Anatolian officials (generally constructed on the principle of *rabi*+substantive) suggest a sophisticated administration that oversaw every sector of the palace economy. However, we know little about the activities of individual officials.⁴⁸ The known titles are Assyrian translations of Anatolian terms, and they sometimes cause confusion. At the top of the hierarchy was the *rabi simmiltim*; below him were the *rabi sikkatim*, who had commercial and military responsibilities (he supervised the “chief of the troops”, *rabi ummanātim*), and the *rabi huršātim*, “chief of warehouses”, who was in charge of the palace storage units. The responsibilities of the “second man”, the *šinahilum*, are unclear, as are those of the “steward” (*alahhinnum*), especially as it appears to be possible for one person to hold both offices. These two terms, borrowed from Hurrian, are attested in other Akkadian texts;⁴⁹ they also appear in the abstract form in the Old Assyrian corpus (*alahhinnumtum*, *šinahilumtum*).⁵⁰ The “majordomo”, *rabi bētim*,

44 KTK 106; Kt 93/k 145.

45 Kaniš: Michel 2001, n. 207; Luhusaddia: Michel 2001, n. 10; Waḥšušana: KTS 1 50c; Ališar: OIP 27 5.

46 Veenhof 2008a, 169–173.

47 Özgüç 2003, 187–192.

48 Veenhof 2008a, 219–245.

49 Dercksen 2007, 37f.

50 Veenhof 1989, 518.

supervised the palace domain, while the “chief of the gates”, *rabi abullātim*, along with the “chief of the porters”, *rabi ūtu’ē*, oversaw the palace entrances, undoubtedly assisted by the guards under the authority of the “chief of the guards”, *rabi maṣṣarātim*.

Among the prince’s intimates were the “chief scepter-bearer”, *rabi haṭṭim*, the “chief cup-bearer”, *rabi šāqē*, and the “chief of the tables” *rabi paššūrē*. The prince’s private staff perhaps also included the “chief vizier”, *rabi šukkallim*, the “chief of the heralds”, *rabi nā-girē*, the “chief of the messengers”, *rabi lāsimē*, and the “chief of the interpreters”, *rabi targumannē*.

The “men”, *awilē*, the “workers”, *šābē*, and the “slaves”, *urdē*, were overseen by three different officials. The artisans, under the overall direction of the “chief of the workers”, *rabi šābē/šābim*, were further separated into different trades, each supervised by another chief, such as the “chief of the metalworkers”, *rabi nappāhē*, who worked closely with the “chief of the arms”, *rabi kakkē*, himself answerable to the *rabi sikkatim*. In the agricultural sector, we find the “chief of the barley”, *rabi še’ē*, the “chief of the threshing floor”, *rabi adrim*, the “chief of the gardens”, *rabi kiriātīm*, and the “chief of the gardeners”, *rabi nuk(i)ribbē*. Other officials were given charge of a single sector of production, like the “chief of the vegetables”, *rabi ūrqē*, “the chief of the wine”, *rabi kirānim*, the “chief of the flax”, *rabi kittātīm*, and the “chief of the oil”, *rabi šamnim*, who was charged with collecting (sesame?) oil and distributing it throughout the palace. The “chief of the wood”, *rabi eṣṣe*, was probably responsible for supplying the palace and its kitchens with firewood. The officials who oversaw the palace flocks were given titles reflecting the animals they were charged with supervising: the “chief of the horses”, *rabi sisē*, the “chief of the mules”, *rabi perdim*, the “chief of the dogs”, *rabi kalbātīm*. One Peruwa, apparently “chief of the shepherds”, *rabi rē’ē/rē’im*, whose records were unearthed during the earliest excavations at Kültepe, accumulated enough wealth to purchase an entire village. The goods produced by the palace lands were doubtlessly sold under the authority of the “chief of the market”, *rabi mahīrim*. In the religious domain, finally, the prince had at his disposition the “chief of the oblates”, *rabi šarīqē*, and the “chief of offerings”, *rabi niqē*. The palaces of Anatolia were clearly economic centers, and had many dealings with foreign merchants.

Aside from palace officials and artisans the Anatolian population was essentially rural, free but poor (*hupšum*). The farmers cultivated just enough to support the needs of their family, and the majority of the land belonged to the urban elite and to the palace. The prince often bestowed land or even entire villages on palace officials, either as gifts that they were then free to resell, or as compensation for services rendered. The service due to the king or to a high official – called *arhālum*, and mentioned only in the archives at Kaniš – was required only if someone lived in the “household of the king”; if the person left the household (because of a divorce, for example), he became exempt from service.⁵¹ Among the kinds of service that counted for the *arhālum* was the corvée (*unuššum*), principally docu-

51 Dercksen 2004b, 140–147.

mented during the *kārum* Ib and whose name, Hurrian in origin, also appears in the second half of the second millennium at Alalakh IV and at Ugarit (as *bēlū unuššim*).⁵² In one surviving trade agreement, the ruler of Kaniš promises not to disturb the Assyrians while taking a census of the people bound to the *unušsum* service.⁵³

It was not unusual that individuals entered into slavery in order to pay off a debt, either sold by a relative or by themselves; they could buy their freedom back after a certain amount of time had passed. The amount of time that had to pass was agreed upon when the person was sold into debt slavery, and usually they had to pay at least double the price of their original debt. The sale of Anatolian slaves was supervised by the reigning prince or by one of his representatives.

The texts offer little information on the priesthood, and we have no understanding of the organization of the temples. The only temples mentioned are those to Anna and Nipas. The patron deity of Kaniš seems to have been Anna (*ilat ālim*) and the texts give other names to the deities revered by the inhabitants of the city-state: Hikiša, Ilialanta, Kubabat, the Lord of the Battle (*Bēl qablim*), Nisaba (Halki), Pirwa, the storm god, and the sun god. We also know the names of a certain number of priests, either because they appear in commercial transactions, or because they were landowners, but we know nothing of their activities in the religious cult.⁵⁴

2.4 Foundations for a political history of Anatolia

Giving a continuous account of the political history of Anatolia during the *kārum* periods would be impossible at this stage; in fact, the information given by the Assyrian archives on local political events is brief and undated. During the level II at Kaniš (ca. 1950–1835 BC), the Anatolian city-states, whether powerful or weak, were sometimes allies and sometimes rivals; their urban centers were all fortified, suggesting repeated conflict. Each city-state secured trade agreements with the Assyrians independently of the others.⁵⁵ The absence of a strong central power in Anatolia undoubtedly helped the commercial activities of the Assyrians, whose business in turn guaranteed a certain degree of intra-Anatolian stability by unifying the local trade in copper and wool. The peace guaranteed by the commercial treaties reflected an ideal situation, not necessarily the reality: the correspondence of merchants testifies to various internal political problems, including unrest following the death of a prince, rebellions of various kinds, and the forming of coalitions and conflicts between the Anatolian states.⁵⁶ A vacant throne or political instability within a city-state often

52 von Dassow 2008, 162f.

53 Kt 00/k 6:84, Günbattı 2004; Veenhof 2008a, 193.

54 Kryszat 2006.

55 Veenhof, in print.

56 Michel 2008a; Michel 2008b.

brought caravan traffic to a halt, or even caused the city to be closed to foreigners.⁵⁷ The absence of a local sovereign during a military expedition could plunge the state into anarchy;⁵⁸ similarly, the belligerent behavior of a ruler could disrupt trade in the region: “the king has shed blood and his throne is no longer secure. The treaties are postponed. The princes are watching one another.”⁵⁹ Certain texts refer to the oaths (*mamītum*) sworn by different sovereigns so as to form an alliance, like that between Wahšušana and Kaniš;⁶⁰ but the references to conflicts between Anatolian states are more frequent, as Assyrian merchants were sometimes unwillingly involved. Aššur-taklāku, whose archives were excavated in 1993, seems to have been taken hostage in the war between Tawinia and Wašhania.⁶¹ The movements of kings are also mentioned in the archives whenever they cause the caravan routes to be closed to commercial traffic;⁶² these royal journeys reflected diplomatic relations between certain Anatolian princes.

The period of the *kārum* II was marked by an ongoing war to the west between the cities of Burušhattum and Wahšušana, a conflict in which Šaladuwar was involved several times: “Invade the land of Wahšušana! Otherwise, I am your enemy.”⁶³ And again: “until the *rabi sikkatim* makes the princes of Burušhattum, Ušunalam, and Wahšušana swear an oath, he must not visit (these places).”⁶⁴ The battle turned in favor of the city-state of Burušhattum, the main market for silver, which took on importance at the end of the *kārum* II, during which the Assyrian community abandoned the city of Wahšušana.⁶⁵ In the same period (or perhaps at the beginning of the *kārum* Ib), the princes of Šinahutum, Amkuwa and Kapitra joined in an alliance against the king of Hattuš.⁶⁶

The information at our disposal for the period of the *kārum* Ib in Kaniš (ca. 1830–1700) changes as the sources are of lesser quality and of a very different nature. References to relations between the principalities become rarer, and the majority of references to the local princes themselves come from Anatolian contracts notarized by the local sovereign and by the *rabi simmiltim*; *kārum* Ib has also yielded several trade agreements. Hurmeli², Harpatiwa, Inar and his son Warša/uma, Pithana and his son Anitta, and Zuzzu succeeded to the throne of Kaniš during the 18th century BC.⁶⁷ In a letter addressed to Waršama, prince of Kaniš, Anum-hirbe, Hurrian prince of Mamma, recounts the invasion of his kingdom and the plundering of his villages by a vassal of the ruler of Kaniš; he also refers to the long

57 Kt 93/k 179 and 237; Michel 2008a.

58 Kt 92/k 526; Veenhof, in print.

59 Michel 2001, no. 98 et 99.

60 Michel 2001, no. 65.

61 Michel – Garelli 1996; Günbattu 2001; Michel 2008a.

62 Kt 93/k 685, 7–18; see also Kt 92/k 194.

63 Michel 2001, no. 57.

64 Michel 2001, no. 100 and also no. 64.

65 Barjamovic et al. 2012; Veenhof, in print.

66 KTK 10, Larsen 1972; Michel 2001, no. 63.

67 Veenhof 2008a, 169–173; Kryszat 2008b; Kryszat 2008c; Barjamovic et al. 2012.

siege of Harsamna carried out by his father, Inar.⁶⁸ The same conflict may have been referenced in an unpublished letter sent to the *kārum* at Kaniš by the assembly of Aššur: it gives an account of a war between Harsamna and Zalpa, just after the death of Šamši-Adad and the ascension of Išme-Dagan to the throne.⁶⁹ The reigns of Pithana and Anitta are documented by the Anitta text, a later Hittite document, which recounts how Pithana, king of Kuššara, conquered Kaniš and dethroned its king.⁷⁰ Anitta succeeded his father to the throne of Kaniš and enjoyed great success on the battlefield: he bestowed upon himself the title of Great Prince (*rubā'um rabium*). He destroyed Hattuš around 1730⁷¹ and occupied the palace of Waršama, which he had not destroyed. As the new king of Kaniš he ordered the construction of two temples. Zuzu, king of Alahzina, the latest of the conquerors of Kaniš, is the last known ruler (Great Prince) of Kaniš; he probably reigned from about 1725 until the last years of the 18th century.⁷² The rivalries between Anatolian states seem to have been the cause of the end of the *kārum* Ib: several kingdoms disappeared entirely and are no longer documented during the Hittite period.

3 The population of the trading posts in Anatolia

The main motivation for the presence of the Assyrians in Asia Minor was above all related to trade and was based on the treaties ratified by local authorities; other merchants, coming from Syria and Upper Mesopotamia, also frequented the Anatolian trading posts. At Kaniš, the relations between foreign merchants (especially Assyrian) and the Anatolians went beyond just the exchange of trade-goods; interactions between the two communities are visible in the material culture, the language and the writing. Mixed marriages became common and a hybrid society developed within the lower city.⁷³

3.1 The Assyrians

The Assyrians living in the lower city quarters were administratively and legally independent from the local authorities. Yet they were connected to the government of Aššur via the *kārum* at Kaniš. Interactions with local authorities were determined by the treaties signed by the representatives of the *kārum* and the local prince; these agreements recognized the mutual and complementary interests of the two parties and guaranteed peaceful coexist-

68 Balkan 1957; Miller 2001.

69 Günbattı 2005.

70 Waršama, ca. 1750; Carruba 2003; Barjamovic et al. 2012.

71 Kryszat 2008c.

72 Kt j/k 625 and Kt 89/k 625; ca. 1716 according to Barjamovic et al. 2012.

73 Michel 2010.

ence between them. The Anatolian palace collected an import duty on merchandise and had preemptive purchasing rights to textiles; in exchange, the Assyrians were permitted to reside within the *kārum* and were accorded certain protections. Similarly, their caravans, men, animals and merchandise were protected along guarded routes.⁷⁴ The first Assyrians to settle at Kaniš, usually the eldest sons of trading families, came to Anatolia to represent their family firms. They did not necessarily come from the wealthiest classes of Aššur, but, being generally richer than the indigenous population, they quickly became the major creditors in Anatolia. Many of them had houses in the *kārum*; others lived temporarily in the homes of other Assyrians, sometimes leaving their archives there.⁷⁵

Two treaties dating from the *kārum* Ib have been discovered at Kaniš in recent years: one was negotiated with the Great Prince of Kaniš (either Anitta or Zuzu) and the other with dignitaries from Hahhum.⁷⁶ They guaranteed that caravan traffic would continue even during times of conflict, and depict a situation slightly different from that of the *kārum* II. The texts thenceforth distinguish Assyrians who resided in the *kārum* (*wašbūtum*) from those involved in the caravan trade with Aššur (*ālikūšša harrān ālim*).⁷⁷ The former, who were completely invested in intra-Anatolian trade, seem to have been less prosperous, and often in debt. Individual clauses in the treaties therefore protected Assyrian households with *tamkārum* or widows from seizure of property by Kanišites, *hapīrū*, or the local prince.⁷⁸

3.2 The “Anatolians”

In the lower city, the Assyrians dealt with many different ethnic groups whom they invariably designated with the generic term *nu’ā’um*, meaning “Anatolian”. For the Assyrians, this term was not pejorative; the Anatolians, meanwhile, designated the Assyrians by the word *tamkārum*, which signifies “the merchant”.⁷⁹ The Anatolians in Kaniš lived either in the citadel or in the lower city; those who lived in the latter were often merchants. Many of them bore personal names with either a Hittite or Luwian etymology; certain others had names of Hattic origin – an agglutinative language which does not belong to any known linguistic family but which seems to have been influenced by Luwian.⁸⁰ The Hittites and Luwians, both Indo-European populations, seem to have arrived in central Anatolia during the last centuries of the third millennium. Hittite became the dominant language in central

74 Michel 2001, no. 87; Veenhof 2003.

75 Michel – Garelli 1997, 27–34.

76 Günbatti 2004; Veenhof 2008a, 183–218.

77 Barjamovic et al. 2012.

78 Veenhof 2008a, 147–182.

79 Michel 2010.

80 Garelli 1963, 127–168; Dercksen 2002; Goedegebuure 2008.

Anatolia from about the 19th century forward; the majority of linguistic borrowings discovered in the Old Assyrian archives are taken from an early form of Hittite.⁸¹

The archives discovered in certain houses in the *kārum* in Kaniš show a concentration of houses belonging to the Assyrians in the north and more houses belonging to the Anatolians in the south, but the separation between the communities was not so clear. Assyrians and Anatolians interacted on a daily basis and the use of different languages does not seem to have been an obstacle to communication, a fact confirmed by the numerous “native” words to be found in Old Assyrian texts. The interpreters (*targumannum*) were not numerous and seem to have been principally employed by the government administration to maintain commercial and diplomatic relations between local palaces and the *kārum* offices. It is possible that these translators may have offered their services to other foreign merchants doing business in Kaniš.

3.3 The Hurrians and other foreigners in Anatolia

The archives taken from Kaniš mention other groups of foreigners, designated by the languages they speak: certain personal names have an Amorite or Hurrian etymology, and certain individuals are identified as natives of foreign places, such as Ebla, indicating that there were close commercial contacts between the Anatolian plateau and northern Syria.⁸² The laws of the city of Aššur prohibited Assyrians from selling gold to the different groups they traded with at Aššur (except to the Elamites) or on the road to Asia Minor, including the Akkadians (meaning Babylonians) to the south of Aššur with whom they traded goods; the Amorites, whose territories they crossed where the Euphrates curves to the west, at the Upper Jazirah (where the village of Nihriya, among others, is located); and the Subareans (or Hurrians), who lived to the north of Aššur along the Tigris and in the mountains of Upper Mesopotamia.⁸³ The gods of Amurru and Subartu are invoked in a treaty ratified between Aššur and Apum.⁸⁴

During *kārum* Ib period (18th century), the Hurrians, who several centuries later would found the kingdom of Mittani, progressively settled west of the Euphrates, south of the Anti-Taurus, and east of Anatolia.⁸⁵ Although tablets dating from the *kārum* II at Kaniš contain words of Hurrian origin⁸⁶ as well as cloth produced in Hurrian territory or woven in the Hurrian style,⁸⁷ the majority of Hurrian personal names mentioned in the Old Assyrian

81 Dercksen 2007.

82 Bilgiç 1992; TPAK I 109:4; Kt 88/k 525:5–6, cf. Michel 2010b; Kt 91/k 338:2; Kt 94/k 421:28.

83 Michel 2001, no. 2.

84 Eidem 1991; Kryszat 2003.

85 Veenhof 2008c; Wilhelm 2008; Michel 2012.

86 Dercksen 2007.

87 Michel – Veenhof 2010; Michel 2012.

archives appear in texts dating from the *kārum* Ib. This is the case, for example, with two letters addressed to a Hurrian named Unapše, who had temporarily or definitively settled in Kaniš.⁸⁸ In the first of these letters, Ehli-Addu, writing from western Syria, reclaims the reimbursement of a debt left unpaid for two decades; he mentions witnesses in the city of Haššum, quite certainly located in the region of Gaziantep.⁸⁹ In the second letter, Abduata asks Unapše to send a tablet containing a proposition about a sale of textiles to a scribe who understands and reads Hurrian.⁹⁰ In both cases, these letters have no connection to other documents in the archive. Two other documents excavated in 1990 contain foreign names, mostly Hurrian. The arbitration Kt 90/k 358+359, dating presumably to the *kārum* Ib period and concerning commercial affairs that took place in part at Burušhattum, involved one Urumum and the Hurrian Dakip-šarri.⁹¹ The letter Kt 90/k 360 was addressed to five persons bearing Amorite and Hurrian names: G/Kalali, whose official title, *hašuhlu*, was Hurrian, the Amorite Zimri-Addu, or Hašip-Teššup, a Hurrian personal name that is mentioned in the archives of Shemshara, and later in those of Nuzi.⁹² The foreign syllabary and composition of this letter, which recalls festive days spent by the author in the company of the ruler of Kaniš, suggests that it was sent from somewhere along the Upper Tigris or east of the river. These various documents indicate that during the *kārum* Ib, new populations took an interest in trade with Anatolia. Finally, the best known Hurrian, who moved into Anatolia in the 18th century BC, is the ruler of Mamma, Anum-hirbe, who was the author of a letter sent to his counterpart at Kaniš.⁹³

3.4 Relations between different ethnic groups

At Kaniš, the Assyrians settled in the lower city; they purchased houses built in the local style and used the pottery produced by local craftspeople for their everyday needs. Nevertheless, certain traces bear witness to their foreign origins.⁹⁴ Artifacts discovered in their tombs and houses indicate cultural practices that were typical for the Assyrians. Although they were immersed in a cultural and linguistic environment that was very different from their own, the Assyrians adapted their vocabulary to the local realities. The Old Assyrian tablets include numerous loanwords, not only from an early version of Hittite spoken at Kaniš, but also from Hurrian.⁹⁵ Unfortunately, the documentation is very vague when it

88 AKT 4 34:23.

89 Kt k/k 4, Hecker 1991 and 1996; Wilhelm 2008.

90 Subarean; Kt 91/k 539, Veenhof 2008c.

91 Michel 2010b.

92 Michel 2010b.

93 Balkan 1957; Miller 2001.

94 Michel 2010a.

95 Dercksen 2007.

comes to information on the integration of other foreigners into the culture of the lower city at Kaniš; for example, written documents mentioning the Hurrians, whose presence is particularly well attested during the *kārum* Ib, are still too few to allow for any major conclusions.

The Anatolians, meanwhile, adopted the system of syllabic writing used by the Assyrians but did not attempt to apply it to their own language; they preserved the Old Assyrian dialect, which had become the language of diplomacy. It is well known that Anatolian scribes in the major urban centers wrote contracts that contained certain grammatical errors, for example, confusing grammatical genders, clearly indicating the different linguistic environments.⁹⁶ Furthermore, some of the houses, in which archives were found, belonged to indigenous Anatolians. The Anatolians, who traditionally used stamp seals, began using the cylinder seal under the influence of the Assyrians and developed a local style that borrowed elements from Old Babylonian, Old Assyrian and Old Syrian styles, all of which had arrived through trade.⁹⁷

At first the Anatolians acted as clients of the Assyrians: they purchased Assyrian merchandise, paid directly or with credit, and those who did not belong to the elite often appeared in the records as debtors to the Assyrians, owing small sums of silver, copper, or sacks of grain. Some Anatolians, however, entered into real trade partnerships with the Assyrians: they were entrusted with merchandise, lending capital and selling slaves. During their lengthy residency in Anatolia, certain Assyrians, already married at Aššur, got married for a second time to Anatolian women.⁹⁸ Others settled in Kaniš with their families; Assyrian widows took Anatolian men as second husbands. The Assyrian population of Kaniš decreased perceptibly during the second half of the 18th century (at the end of the *kārum* II); nevertheless, long-distance trade continued with Aššur. According to the royal archives at Mari, in the 18th century BC (during the *kārum* Ib), great trade caravans still traveled between Aššur and Kaniš, and this trade remained profitable both for investors in Aššur and Assyrians in Kaniš, who had accounts at the local trading post. Many Assyrian merchants gradually climbed upwards on the social scale, while other Assyrian merchants got more and more involved in the local trade in copper and wool, lost contact with their countrymen in Aššur, and at times became impoverished. Specific clauses included in the treaties dating from the *kārum* Ib make some attempts at protecting these Assyrians, who were cut-off from their homeland and increasingly immersed in a hybrid Assyrio-Anatolian community.⁹⁹

96 Dercksen 2007; Kryszat 2008a.

97 Özgüç 1965; Özgüç 2006.

98 Michel 2008d.

99 Michel 2010a; Barjamovic et al. 2012.

The Old Assyrian archives excavated at Kaniš, Amkuwa and Hattuš allow us to reconstruct some aspects of the political, economic and social history of Anatolia in the first centuries of the second millennium BC. The presence of the Assyrians in Central Anatolia was primarily economic and not political. They were the most numerous and best organized foreigners in the Anatolian trading posts, especially at Kaniš, where they did business with other merchants from southwestern Turkey, from northern Syria and from Upper Mesopotamia. Among the Upper Mesopotamians, individuals bearing Hurrian names, although rare during the *kārum* II, seem to have become well established in eastern Anatolia during the *kārum* Ib. Their arrival in Anatolia from Upper Mesopotamia, where certain Hurrian rulers reigned (in, for example, the state of Idamarāš¹⁰⁰), seems to have coincided with the reign of Šamši-Adad.¹⁰¹ Letters found at Kaniš, most probably dating to the *kārum* Ib, which contain an unusual syllabary as well as Hurrian expressions and personal names, show the increasing interest the Hurrians had for Anatolia, where certain Hurrian speakers had taken power.¹⁰² In any case, the documentation of the Hurrian presence in Anatolia in the 18th century BC remains limited: only 2 % of the discovered documents at Kaniš date from the *kārum* Ib period, and they are for the most part still unpublished. Finally, with the departure of the Assyrians involved in long distance trade at the end of the 18th century, writing disappeared from Anatolia for nearly a century, during which time the Hurrian presence must have slowly taken on a more substantial and structured form.¹⁰³

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100 Cf. Guichard (this volume, p. 147–160).

101 Cf. J. Eidem (this volume p. 137–146).

102 Anum-hirbe at Mamma, for example; Miller 2001.

103 Cf. de Martino (this volume p. 61–74).

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The Kingdom of Šamši-Adad and its Legacies

Introduction

The origins of the Mittani Kingdom remain obscure. Epigraphic evidence from its capital sites, ancient Waššukanni and Taidu, will hopefully one day fill some of the gaps, and the ongoing excavations at Tall Fakhariya and Tall Hamidiya, likely candidates for these two sites, could produce such evidence at short notice.¹ Meanwhile, however, we are faced with an historical challenge: how to bridge the gap between the end of the MBA / Old Babylonian period and the subsequent LBA / Mittani era, and to understand how society changed over the relevant centuries, while even the exact time span is open to fierce debate. As a modest contribution to illuminating these problems the present paper examines presumed formative or “virtual” Mittani social and political structures, discernible prior to the formation of the actual and formal Mittani kingdom, when such structures are documented as being juxtaposed with – and in opposition to – those of lowland Mesopotamian society, represented by the Kingdom of Šamši-Adad. This situation highlights some crucial aspects of social and political control in Northern Mesopotamia and, by implication, in the subsequent transition.

The kingdom of Šamši-Adad

The archives from ancient Mari, supplemented by an increasing number of other sources, provide unusually detailed documentation for the composite “Kingdom of Upper Mesopotamia” created by Šamši-Adad and his sons,² especially as related to the phases of its apogee

* NINO, Leiden.

¹ Excavations at Tall Fakhariya 2008 and 2009 produced suggestive, but not conclusive epigraphic evidence for the identification (Bonatz 2010). Tall Hamidiya has recently produced a small archive, which indeed seems to support the proposed identification (Kessler 2010).

² For numerical assessment of the sources see Eidem 2004. The number of letters published or quoted from this period now approach 700, and the total excavated may well exceed 1000. As is well-known, the pertinent evidence is quite exceptional in several respects. Just to mention one obvious aspect, which I think has often been misrepresented: the core of the Mari texts pertaining to the period of the Šamši-Adad kingdom is of course the correspondence between the king himself and his two sons, and much attention has been paid to the psychological situation between the triad. However interesting that may be, however, the real point is rather that this is a correspondence between the three leaders of an early empire, disclosing, deliberating, and discussing their concrete strategies and tactics in some detail, surely a very rare situation for the entire ancient world.

and dissolution, and the subsequent rump-state ruled by the former heir apparent, Išme-Dagan. Although a number of sources from Mari remain unpublished, recent overviews by Charpin, Ziegler, Villard, and others³ supply a basic contextual and chronological framework for the evidence, and hence a useful departure for use of this evidence in wider perspectives.

There can be little doubt, I think, that the Kingdom of Šamši-Adad (henceforth KSA) owed its brief moments of real glory foremost to the ruthless brilliance of its creator – in spite of the perhaps provocatively conservative nature of such an estimate.⁴ Indeed, careful reading of the sources portrays a desperately chaotic organisation replete with *ad hoc* measures necessary to forge a semblance of cohesion. Put more simply, the kingdom was forced to move and expand – or collapse. It lacked any real legitimacy, and had to simulate roles of local predecessors, like in Mari and Assur, or ultimately attempt to pose as successor to the Sargonic kings (Eidem – Højlund 1993). The almost immediate collapse of the kingdom following the death of Šamši-Adad seems to support this impression of extreme vulnerability.⁵

In the midst of all this turbulence, however, one also senses a deep urge for stability, which the KSA ultimately could not provide, and perhaps managed to supply only briefly in its core. The failure of the Amorite kings, including Šamši-Adad, to provide such stability obviously helped usher in the era of the “Bergvölker”. It seems that the socio-political structures applied – and perhaps those preceeding them – were inadequate to the task. Yet on the margins of the KSA existed what appears to have been a substantially different world, where more tightly-knit socio-political structures prevailed, which therefore, ultimately had a better chance of uniting Upper Mesopotamia.

The vanguard of Mittani?

While the origins and formation of the Mittani kingdom are still unclear, a recent assessment by von Dassow hints at some interesting perspectives: “Rather than retrojecting Mittani itself into the time of Hattušili I and Mušili I [i.e. 16th century], the available evidence warrants inferring that constant conflict with Hatti, fuelled by those two rulers’ wars of conquest, catalyzed the process of coalescence or unification among Hurrian polities that resulted in forming the kingdom called Mittani. It is possible, at the same time, to postulate an antecedent polity that was not replaced by but rechristened as Mittani, shortly after the eclipse of Old Hittite and Old Babylonian sources.”⁶

3 Charpin – Ziegler 2003, Ziegler 2002, Villard 2001, Charpin – Durand 1997.

4 For a similar conclusion, and examples of the “human resource management” strategies of Šamši-Adad see Ziegler 2008.

5 Charpin – Ziegler 2003, 143f.

6 von Dassow 2008, 20.

Indeed such antecedent polities are known to have existed on the northern and eastern marches of Mesopotamia from the time of our earliest records, mostly rather shadowy entities only scantily documented in lowland sources. By a stroke of archaeological luck, however, what is perhaps the best known polity of this kind was contemporary with the KSA. Archival sources from Mari and Shemshāra, ancient Šušarrā⁷, combine to provide the outline of a story which shows how Šamši-Adad's geo-political ambitions brought Hurrian groups from the eastern periphery into the very core of the kingdom, where some of them forged political control with apparently important areas of northeastern Mesopotamia. This control seems to have been short-lived, and in any case fades from record at the end of the Old Babylonian period. The story may, however, be of significant relevance for the subsequent appearance of a Hurrian-Mittani kingdom in Upper Mesopotamia, and therefore worth reviewing in summary form.⁸

During the last years of his life Šamši-Adad, aided by the king of Ešnunna, expanded his power into the plain east of the Tigris, where he conquered important city-states like Arrapha and Qabra.⁹ We still know very little about the population in the region east of the Tigris, but it seems the situation was very similar to the rest of Upper Mesopotamia. Several kings bore Hurrian names, but we also find, e.g. Bunu-Ishtar of Qabrā and Mar-Addu of Ja'ilānum.¹⁰ Further east, however, in the Zagros, were a number of kingdoms, predominantly Hurrian, and apparently organised in a kind of confederacy with the collective label "Turukkum". A leading member of Turukkum was the country known as Itabalum (or Itapalum) with its king Pišenden based in the capital site of Kunšum. The geographical framework for this policy is uncertain, but a distinct possibility is that Itabalum should be sought in the Urmia Basin in modern NW Iran. On the western marches of Itabalum, in NE Iraq, was the outpost of Šušarrā, modern Tall Shemshāra, located on the Lower Zab, where the river flows through the gorge at Darband i-Ramkhan.

Tall Shemshāra was excavated briefly in 1957 by a Danish expedition, and in 1958–1959 by an Iraqi expedition, but is now partly inundated by Lake Dokan. Fig. 1 shows the camp of the Danish expedition on a mound northwest of the main site, which later proved to have a building from the Mittani period under the surface, and it seems that the site, located at a strategic junction, had a long and complicated history (Eidem 2011). On the main mound, however, the Danish expedition uncovered a small, but very informative archive from the time of the KSA. The texts show that ancient Šušarrā was held by a so-called *nuldānum* by the name of Kuwari. The title of *nuldānum* is only known from this spe-

7 Eidem – Læssøe 2001.

8 Most of what follows is based on presentation and discussion in Eidem – Læssøe 2001, and precise references are therefore kept to a minimum.

9 Charpin – Ziegler 2003, 91ff.

10 Cf. the list in Charpin – Ziegler 2003, 268 (in 4.1.7).



Fig. 1 | Tell Shemshāra,
camp of the
Danish expedition
(Photo Jørgen Læssøe).

cific context, but must denote a kind of “duke”,¹¹ with the implication that Kuwari himself was related to the royal house of Itabalthum. Among the letters in the archive were several sent from Pišenden himself, although none addressed to Kuwari, who was informed about the “king” by other associates.

Itabalthum was involved in a conflict with Gutium, another presumably confederate structure centered in modern Luristan, and was allied to Elam in the southern Zagros. The conflict thus spanned the entire stretch of the eastern mountains, and shows that these areas, generally thought to have been the home of poorly organised nomads, in fact were fairly well-integrated in large confederate structures, no doubt aligned primarily along ethnic divisions. Indeed, intense conflict between the predominantly Hurrian Turukkum and Gutium is known to have persisted for many years, and must have been based on fundamental antagonism.¹²

Weakened by expansion of the KSA and Ešnunna, the Turukkean alliance collapsed and the Lord of Šušarrā, Kuwari, was obliged to become a vassal of Šamšī-Adad to protect his

¹¹ A derivation from *walādum* seems possible, but the title as we know it may well be a normalisation of a local, non-Semitic word.

¹² Eidem – Læssøe 2001, 59.

province from Gutium. Simultaneously, large amounts of refugees streamed into the KSA from other areas of Turukkum overrun or threatened by Gutium. A large number of these refugees were eventually placed in the Khabur close to Šubat-Enlil (modern Tall Leilan), the capital of the KSA. When Šamši-Adad subsequently made peace overtures to Gutium, Turukkeans first in the east, and later in the Khabur rose in revolt. Šušarrā was burned down, and displaced Turukkeans threatened areas close to Šubat-Enlil itself. It seems other entities joined in the revolt, which Šamši-Adad and his sons only managed to put down with the greatest difficulty.¹³ An important aspect of these developments is their scale. The leader of the eastern rebellion, Lidaja, collected an alliance of local kings, and was reportedly able to face Išme-Dagan with an army of 10,000 men. In spite of a victory over this army Išme-Dagan subsequently deemed the situation too volatile, and decided to evacuate the area and resettle presumably loyal locals further west near Arrapha and Qabra. The rebellion in the Khabur involved a dramatic story of Turukkeans entrenched in the fortified town of Amur-sakkum, and their subsequent flight north into Anatolia. These and other details demonstrate the considerable numerical and spatial scope of the Turukkean displacements.

After the dissolution of the KSA, however, we find another *nuldānum* of Itabalthum, Zazija, leader of Turukkeans, based apparently west of the old homeland.¹⁴ Although mentioned fairly often in the records from Mari contemporary with the reign of Zimrī-Līm, it is not easy to form a clear impression of Zazija and his domain. Quite likely he was identical with a certain Zazija, of high rank, and temporarily detained at Šušarrā some years earlier. Since Itabalthum still seems an important political entity during the reign of Zimrī-Līm, we must assume that Zazija was formally subordinated to this land but surprisingly he seems to have had some level of control in fairly large areas of the east-Tigris country. This situation, not yet understood in detail, was no doubt a consequence of the dramatic events a few years before, which had thus resulted in Hurrian expansion into the lowland. Is the same trend discernible in other parts of Northern Mesopotamia? The evidence is vague, and since we know very little about the situation prior to the establishment of the KSA, we cannot really compare the degree of Hurrian political influence before and after.

Having disposed of Larsa and Mari, Hammurabi campaigned further north, boasting of victories over the Turukkeans; slave records from Babylonia actually show an influx of Hurrians and others of northern affiliation captured in these encounters (van Koppen 2004). Still later evidence from Tall Leilan makes no mention of the Turukkeans, but in general provides very little information on eastern and northeastern Mesopotamia. Is this a reflection of a new Hurrian take-over in these areas, a situation which could account for the apparent lack of interaction? Obviously such an argument from silence is highly speculative, but perhaps worth considering. In the Khabur region itself the Leilan archives provide some suggestive hints only. The kingdom of Kahat, along the course of Wadi Jaghjagh,

¹³ Eidem – Læssøe 2001, 52–55; Charpin – Ziegler 2003, 106f. and 114–117.

¹⁴ Eidem – Læssøe 2001, 55–58.

distinguished two different population segments, described mysteriously as *nuhašši* and *ši'alPIri*, possibly Semitic and Hurrian respectively.¹⁵ Equally puzzling, and highly surprising, is the mention of *marijannu* soldiers to be exchanged between a ruler of Leilan and another king with a Hurrian name.¹⁶ The context indicates these to be elite soldiers – like the famous namesakes known from the Mittani period. This isolated early reference to *marijannu* soldiers must of course be treated with caution, but may perhaps be viewed as an index of how Hurrian social structure was infiltrating Mesopotamia.

The transition

The incident of early Hurrian expansion briefly recalled here may be viewed as a model for similar incidents, or as an actual overture to the Mittani Kingdom – or both. The Turukkean expansion into northern Mesopotamia was provoked by pressure from both east and west. The prime eastern mover was the polity labelled Gutium, of which we know sadly little. One possibility is that Gutium in turn was under pressure from Kassite groups, or other population displacement even beyond the Zagros. From west the pressure came from the expanding KSA, which disrupted long-standing political relations on the eastern marches of Mesopotamia, and ultimately invited the influx of Turukkeans. In this perspective earlier and later Mesopotamian expansions faced similar problems: elimination of buffer kingdoms opened the door for tougher adversaries who sometimes joined forces to strike back. Defeated by Hammurabi the Turukkean domain would at least temporarily have shrunk back into the mountains, but the episode may well have left a legacy still in memory when much later the Mittani kingdom eventually took shape. In reality the obscurity of the process is perhaps worsened by the fact that it is primarily documented by Hittite sources, which of course concentrate on the Anatolian and North Jazirah scene. It would be rash to suggest that the Mittani Kingdom was forged by the royal line in Itabalthum, and I obviously do not want to be that specific. The point is, however, that Itabalthum seems to represent a pre-Mittani, predominantly Hurrian kingdom of some importance, one which could in fact have survived the Old Babylonian period. Texts from Nuzi refer to the Zagros land of Kunzuhhe, quite likely an echo of the town Kunšum, which was the capital of Itabalthum. In a first instance I would suggest that study of this early Hurrian polity may help us understand how imperial space was structured in the Mittani kingdom, and that this differed considerably from what we find in the KSA.

15 In L.T.-3; cf. Eidem 2011a, 32. Nuhašši is of course reminiscent of the land in Syria known from Mittani period sources, but what was the connection? Likewise ši-al-PI-ri is hard to explain, but at least does not seem Semitic.

16 Leilan letter L.87–887, sent from Kirip-šeriš to Himdija, and with reference to a journey to Babylon to visit the “king”. Presumably the letter dates to the very end of Zimrī-Līm’s reign, or shortly after the fall of Mari. The soldiers exchanged are described as *šāb ma-ri-ia-nim* / *šābī ša ma-ri-a/ia-nim*. The letter has been studied by F. Ismail, to whom I am grateful for this information. For a recent study of the *maryanni* see von Dassow 2008, 268–314.

An early Hurrian polity

The sources at our disposal are of course few and often difficult to interpret, but some features emerge with reasonable clarity:¹⁷

1. The polity of Itabalthum was well-established with a documented succession of at least three kings. It is interesting to note that the seal legends of these kings include mention of the first-born son – or chosen heir – an unusual feature in Mesopotamia, and one which points to a particular system of kingship – perhaps somewhat similar to that known from Elam in the southern Zagros mountains.¹⁸
2. Although the geographical contours of the kingdom are uncertain, it must have spanned a considerable area, encompassing a number of intermontane valleys. Its core may well have been located in the Urmia Basin. Excavated sites here, like Hasanlu and Dinkha Tepe, show connections with Northern Mesopotamia.¹⁹
3. The evidence suggests that different sectors of the kingdom were controlled by different royal or princely lines that may all have been connected to the same dynasty. Šušarra clearly did not belong to the core of the kingdom, and its population, through the council of elders, on at least one occasion, seems to have acted against the policy of the *nuldānum* of Itabalthum.²⁰
4. Although the ruling elite bore predominantly Hurrian names, the kingdom also incorporated other population elements²¹, notably the so-called Lulleans, who seem to represent inhabitants of the higher valleys, and may have had a different ethno-linguistic background.²²
5. The kingdom was allied to several other Zagros kingdoms, presumably all subsumed under the confederate label “Turukkum”²³, which indicates a political construction of some historical depth, documented first in sources from the time of Yahdun-Lim of Mari.²⁴
6. The apparent local features of society were coupled with a marked Mesopotamian influence, as evidenced by the use of cuneiform, knowledge of Akkadian, use of cylinder seals, etc.

17 It should be stressed that the “Hurrian” character of Itabalthum is based on linguistic features only, and not on any formalised ancient denomination. Itabalthum and the other polities subsumed under the label Turukkum may well have had a mixed ethno-linguistic population.

18 Eidem – Læssøe 2001, 25–27.

19 Eidem – Læssøe 2001, 27–30.

20 Eidem – Læssøe 2001, no. 19 and p. 43.

21 Eidem 1992, 46–50.

22 Eidem 1992, 50–54.

23 Eidem – Læssøe 2001, 27.

24 Charpin 1994.

Would these features help account for the relatively successful political integration achieved by the Mittani kingdom, compared to the episodic effort of the KSA? Where and what are the differences? A key element seems to be represented by the third feature listed above. The structured division of political space delegated to members of a closely connected elite was a necessary prerequisite for forming larger polities in the mountains, where topography rendered other constructions unviable. Such elite networks seem relatively foreign to lowland Mesopotamia, where the city-state tradition instead made for well-entrenched and often fierce local independence. In spite of the fairly brilliant idea of Šamši-Adad to delegate power to two of his sons, we clearly see how fragile and wrought with obstacles this construction was through their correspondence found at Mari. Apart from his sons, Šamši-Adad apparently had to rely on a bureaucratic elite, shifting officials across the kingdom.²⁵ The ultimate loyalty of this elite seems not have been very impressive when the end came, and quite a few high-profile officials of the KSA ended up serving new masters. In the old capital of Šubat-Enlil, the famous Samija of course held out for some years, but to what extent this was a result of loyalty to Šamši-Adad or a self-serving measure will perhaps become clear when his intercepted correspondence, found at Mari, is published.²⁶

Summary and conclusions

Since we are still only beginning to understand the inner workings and underlying structures of both the KSA and the Mittani kingdom, detailed comparisons are of course extremely difficult, and I believe it is wise to refrain from making statements which are too categorical, but rather to seek to make the most informed, albeit tentative approaches to the problem. The formation and development of the Mittani Kingdom was of course inscribed in a larger international framework, which also affected the rest of the Near East. In a narrower perspective, however, it seems that the pre-Mittani peripheral principalities in the Zagros and Taurus had developed socio-political structures which could overcome some of the heterogenous and centrifugal forces which characterised Northern Mesopotamia, and thus create a new imperial space, more resilient than that of the KSA.

To turn finally to the reason for the title of this paper I would suggest that inspiration for the formation of the Mittani kingdom may have included memory of the Turukkean exodus, which for a short period linked Hurrian groups in the Zagros and the Khabur, and for which Šamši-Adad was primarily responsible. Another inspiration could have come from

25 Villard 2002.

26 The tablets found on the Leilan acropolis, mostly in the 1985 season, in fact date primarily to the first few years after the death of Šamši-Adad, when Samija still held the city, and the sealings still reflect the *ancien regime* with servants of Šamši-Adad and Sons. Cf. Charpin – Ziegler 2003, 166 ff. It may of course be argued that exactly Kuwari, the *nuldānum* of Šhusharrā, himself became a traitor, but cut off from his base in the east by the Guteans and facing a rebellious local population he may have had no real choice.

the very imperial triangle which Šamši-Adad had created by placing his sons in corners of its base and himself at the apex in the Khabur. Early Mittani kings, perhaps deriving from mountains in the east, may likewise have found it expedient – and prestigious – to build their capital in this strategic region.

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Political Space – Local Political Structures in Northern Syria: The Case of the Country of Ida-Maraş in the Eighteenth Century BC

Introduction

A large number of letters and administrative texts found in Mari, Šeḫnā-Šubat-Enlil, Ašnak-kum (Chagar Bazar?), and elsewhere shed light on the history of the Upper Khabur, an area called Ida-Maraş at the beginning of the 18th century BC.

This area was divided into small political units or “statelets”, sometimes independent and sometimes subject to a stronger state or a remote foreign power (Ešnunna, Mari, Ekal-lātum, Elam ...). One of the characteristics of the so-called Mari period, from the time of Yaḥdun-Lîm to the time of Zimrî-Lîm, is the preeminent role played by the Haneans (“bedouins”).

I will present the situation in the Upper Khabur during the reign of Zimrî-Lîm, who conquered the Ida-Maraş region. I want to concentrate on textual evidence relating to the western part of this area, which is the area between the Wadi Jaghjagh and the source of the Khabur.¹ Texts from Mari offer a vivid and complex view of the history of the area and the people who lived there. The documentation, however, is far from complete, and we must remember that only some aspects of society and the economy are represented.

The period discussed covers only thirteen years and some months, from the accession of Zimrî-Lîm until the defeat of Mari by Babylon (ca. 1774–1761 BC).² The most important part of our corpus of documents concerning Ida-Maraş was not written by administrators or agents of the kingdom of Mari. Some administrators or generals who went to Ida-Maraş, like Asqudum, Bašsum, Abum-El, Yassi-Dagan, went on various missions and sent reports back to the king of Mari. Although of course interesting, their reporting is of limited scope. For example, Abum-El stayed in the land of Ašnak-kum only a few months between the tenth and eleventh regnal year of Zimrî-Lîm, in order to organise peace there.³ The administrative accounts from the Mari palace offer additional evidence, primarily precise indications of time, such as the length of reign of many local rulers. They also offer itineraries, because scribes went with the king’s caravan and recorded presents which the king received from vassals or allies, or recorded presents he offered to them.

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¹ The following ideas are based on my unpublished Habilitation’s Mémoire *Nahur et l’Ida-Maraş, La correspondance d’Itûr-Asdû gouverneur de Nahur sous le règne de Zimrî-Lîm et autres documents*.

² See Charpin – Ziegler 2003, 169–246.

³ See Charpin 1993, 165–191; Guichard 2009, 75–120.

Three other groups of texts, however, provide the most important source material. The first group represents letters coming from the authorities of the towns of Ida-Maraš. Senders are mostly the local kings, but *sugāgum* officials are also represented,⁴ and more rarely, the “elders”. One letter was sent by the elders of Urgiš,⁵ one by the elders of Gaš-šum,⁶ while another was sent by the elders of Kahat, but was originally not for the King of Mari.⁷ This document was probably intercepted.

The second group consists of letters from members of the Hanean groups, subjects, allies, and the army of Zimrī-Līm. The transhumant sections of the Haneans provided the king potential access to information from a wide area. The Chief-of-Pasture defined it in this way: it stretches from Mount Ebiḥ to the land of Yaptur (western part of the Khabur Triangle).⁸ This pasture zone corresponded roughly to the zone which the King of Mari tried to keep under his control. The man in charge of pasture and the transhumant group was called *mer’ûm*. In the North, we know of several chiefs of pasture for the time of Zimrī-Līm, the first being perhaps Zakura-abum,⁹ the second Ašmad.¹⁰ Letters from the last known *mer’ûm*’s – Ibal-El and Ibal-pi-El – are more numerous. Hali-hadun may also have been a *mer’ûm*, or was at least closely associated with the same business during war between Hana Tribes.

Ibal-El explained this seasonal role of collecting information with a nice image:¹¹

My Lord knows that I command Bedouins, and that like any merchant going through war and peace, Bedouins go through war and peace at (the time of) *šepātu*-grain.¹² As they travel they learn what the country speaks about.

So, the leaders of the Bedouins, who moved from place to place, sent letters from different countries, had lots of contacts, and met many informants. The implication is that they either had some knowledge of writing or that they employed scribes. This fact goes against the common idea that writing was used in urban contexts only or expresses only the viewpoint of the sedentary people. The tone, style and ideas of the *mer’ûm* make this correspondence original. In the Mari hierarchy, the rank of the *mer’ûm* was very high. The *mer’ûm* is a Bedouin and often expresses the desires and values of the Bedouins, and he had freedom of speech. So, it is not surprising to find in his letters the most exalted expressions as well as

4 See for example ARM XXVIII 120 from Luhayum, a town located in the land of Yaptur. For further comments on this letter see Guichard 2009, 75–120.

5 FM II 125.

6 A.2126. This unpublished letter is quoted by Charpin – Ziegler 2003, 52 n. 203.

7 An unpublished text composed of several fragments that I identified in September 2009 in the Museum of Deir-Ez-Zor.

8 See FM VI 9 and Durand 2004, III–197.

9 See Guichard 2002, 119–168.

10 See Durand – M. Guichard 1997, 33 n. 80.

11 LAPO 16 333 and Charpin – Durand 1990, 120–122.

12 For this interpretation, see Guichard 2002, 161–163.

occasionally the worst criticism addressed to the king, but of course he acts as defender of the kingdom of Mari.

Finally, the third group of documents were sent by officials who settled in the midst of Ida-Maraš, such as Yamsūm, who was responsible for a Mari garrison in Ilān-šūrā.¹³ The most important correspondence of this category is without doubt that of Itūr-asdu. This very high official became governor of Naḥur in the sixth year of Zimrī-Līm and stayed in this town until the end of Mari.¹⁴ At least one hundred letters were sent by him from Naḥur or its vicinity to Zimrī-Līm.¹⁵ Because his correspondence is relatively abundant, detailed and regular, it represents our main source about the western part of Ida-Maraš in the second part of the reign of Zimrī-Līm, while we have many gaps in the preceding period. The activities of the governor were twofold. On the one hand, he was a representative of the king and a very precious informant. On the other hand he controlled a town and its countryside/hinterland. The latter aspect of his power or responsibilities is less known (except at the beginning of his stay) because he usually avoided describing it. Far away from Mari, he seems to have had a relative degree of autonomy, making him similar to a small king. But unlike the rulers of Ida-Maraš who lived in his vicinity, he could be dismissed from his post at any time. This fact considerably influenced the nature of his correspondence. The letters of the vassals can be suspected of hypocrisy, of lies or intentional distortion, because the vassals were, for any number of reasons, potential rebels. On the other hand, the letters of Itūr-asdu seem to be more reliable. He certainly had local interests that may have influenced his reports, but he never forgot his main function as an agent and representative of the Mari kingdom. He was not a native ruler and as such had no legitimacy. He himself checked the value of the information he managed to collect, and he often gives the origin of his sources.

It is interesting to note that we have several cases in which one event is related by two or three independent witnesses. We can compare their reports and observe that although the facts more or less coincide, the distribution of roles varies. Two army officers who take part in the same battle will never tell the same story but will turn the facts to their advantage.¹⁶ In his letters, Itūr-asdu wanted to give an ideal image of himself as a governor, and the Chief of Pasture wants the reports of his own actions to reflect the model of the ideal Chief of Pasture.

But the most important fact is that the events recorded on the Mari tablets were selected according to the interests of the king of Mari or of the leaders of the Hanean Bensi-malite confederation.

¹³ Charpin 1989, 31–III.

¹⁴ See Guichard 2008, 43–53.

¹⁵ The precise location of this town is unknown. J.-M. Durand has suggested that Kizil Tepe could be a good candidate. See Durand 2004, Nicolle 2004, 122. Nevertheless a better localization seems to be Derbassiye according to Charpin 2009, 69.

¹⁶ See the case of the battle of Pardu: *FM* II, p. 260–263.

The correspondence usually adopts the viewpoint of Mari's political interests. Consequently the internal economy of the little states of Ida-Maraš is not very well documented, and the real opinion of the local population is not so easy to grasp. A Mari official such as Itūr-asdu was obviously aware of this problem when he mentions in one of his reports the fact that there is a contradiction between what the people (*muškēnum*) say and what they really think or do: "people are small minded".¹⁷

The correspondence of Mari offers a view of the structures of Ida-Maraš from the viewpoint of the Bensimalites. The function of the king's informant (official, vassal or nomad) is secondary. What matters is his political stance.

Instability was a characteristic of Ida-Maraš, and events occasioned intense written communication between Mari and Ida-Maraš. We therefore have access to a lot of incidental information that permits a partial reconstruction of the ancient society.

Historical overview

Because the land of Ida-Maraš was divided into small political unities, its political history is difficult to depict synthetically. The easiest way may be to observe this history from the viewpoint of Mari. So our "roter Faden" being the Mari hegemony, the period of Zimrī-Līm can be summarised like this:

After Samsī-Addu died, Išme-Dagan in Ekallātum and Yasmaḥ-Addu in Mari had lost control over the cities of Ida-Maraš. Princes in exile came back to recover the throne of their ancestors, except when someone from the local elite had already taken their place. This certainly was the case in Naḥur and Ašnakkum. Most cities were favourable to the Haneans, who fought for Zimrī-Līm. However the new kings of Naḥur and Ašnakkum became, during a very short period, leaders of the western Ida-Maraš. They wanted to be treated like equal allies by Zimrī-Līm.¹⁸ After the defeat of Yasmaḥ-Addu in Mari, pressed by the Haneans, the new king came up to the Upper Khabur to conquer the land. The fall of the town of Kahat was the climax of his military campaign. The so-called "Zimrī-Līm Epic" commemorates his victorious war in the name of Enlil/Dagan.¹⁹ He was actually helped in the western part of the Khabur Triangle by the king of Burundum, Adalšenni. With the disappearance of the first kings of Naḥur and Ašnakkum, local independence was lost.

From this moment until the middle of Zimrī-Līm's reign, the history of Ida-Maraš is rather confused and our information incomplete. Crises occurred in Naḥur, and the town was destroyed. In Ašnakkum, Sammêtar became king. He faced serious difficulties, but he managed to keep his authority. Šūb-rām was at that time king of Qirdaḥat. The wars of

¹⁷ A.482 (unpublished).

¹⁸ See for example *FM* VI 6.

¹⁹ Guichard (forthcoming).

Zimrī-Līm against the Benjaminites and Ešnunna provoked substantial troubles in Ida-Maraş, and many small kings disappeared. They were replaced by others. In Zalluḥan for example there was an interesting political change. Zakura-abum, who was probably Chief of Pasture at the beginning of Zimrī-Līm's reign, had driven away the local dynasty and officially became king of Zalluḥan.

There was also a change in Zimrī-Līm's strategy. In order to have better control over Ida-Maraş, Zimrī-Līm annexed Naḥur and settled a Mari garrison there. The town was repopulated, and Itūr-asdu was installed as governor in the sixth year of his lord. The Elamite war (Zimrī-Līm year 9) was a disaster in the North. Many Mari vassals were killed because the war had provoked several palace revolutions, and Zimrī-Līm's credibility was damaged. After the end of this conflict, Ašnakkum and its countryside descended into a kind of civil war. The most serious danger came from Ibāl-Addu of Ašlakkā, who prepared a major revolt against Mari. The war broke out during the winter of the twelfth year of Zimrī-Līm. Ašlakkā was conquered, but Ibāl-Addu escaped. He continued his war in the northern part of Yaptur during the last year of Zimrī-Līm²⁰, when there was a major struggle between Mari and Eluḥut. The Mari documentation stops at the end of Zimrī-Līm's thirteenth regnal year.

1 General setting: the mountains, and the dry and humid Ida-Maraş

The general setting is that of the Khabur Basin. This region is defined by surrounding reliefs – the Tur 'Abdin chain to the North, the Djebel Abd el-Aziz, and the Sindjar –, and a bottleneck-shaped hydrographical web. The southern slope of the Tur 'Abdin represents a piedmont with a winter climate wet enough to allow dry farming.

This territory was integrated into the quite vague geographical and cultural (even political) concept of Subartum. It is both the dry farming area and the northern part of Mesopotamia. Inhabitants of the Upper Khabur may be called Šubareans. However, we can observe that Subartum/Subarean had negative connotations for the people of Mari. These terms implied the notion of foreign land or foreigners or even enemies. Inhabitants of the Khabur Triangle almost never call themselves Subareans.²¹

The northern part of Ida-Maraş may be called "*lēt šadīm*" that is "mountain border". We know that cities such as Ašlakkā and Naḥur were close to the mountain slopes. A king of Talḥayūm received the title *sikkat šadīm* litt. "mountain peg". This expression is also used of a stronghold, and we can understand that this king played the role of a "lock" (= peg to close door etc.). His city was in a strategic location at the entrance of the corridor between Qaraça Dağ and Izala, a possible way to travel from the plain to the city of Burundum. The king of Talḥayūm had (relative) control over mountain peoples whose raids were feared.

20 See Guichard 2009, 75–120.

21 See Guichard 2002, 134–137.

The wooded slopes of the mountains (simply called *šadûm*) were exploited by small kingdoms, notably Ašlakkā.²² The mountains were not totally uninhabited, since we sometimes read about the *pabanhû* (mountaineers) and some cities north of Talḥayûm are explicitly designated as being located in the mountains. It seems that Eluḥut, which was not a city of the piedmont, had authority over a major part of the ṬurʿAbdin. The mountains were a place of refuge for the people of the plain in case of insecurity.

As for the plain itself, archaeological surveys suggest that the area southwest of the Jaghjagh was not densely inhabited.²³ The epigrapher may be surprised by this result, since texts mention the existence of numerous towns and villages shared by several countries, though very small, and most toponyms cannot be located. The modern Turkish border following the ṬurʿAbdin slopes prevents us from knowing precisely the archaeological situation to the north of the Khabur Triangle. The southern part was probably drier than the northern half. We would thus have to suppose a concentration of sedentary installations to the north of a line going through Chagar Bazar (Ašnakkum?), while the river banks of the Khabur would be inhabited by temporary nomadic installations only.

But texts show that a kingdom with two historical capital cities (Š/Susā, Qirdaḥat) stretched to the south of Ašnakkum. Moreover, it has now been demonstrated by an itinerary dated to the time of Yasmaḥ-Addu that Qirdaḥat, Tarnip and Zalluḥan were located along the Khabur.²⁴

Nonetheless, in the time of Zimrī-Līm, Qirdaḥat and Tarnip declined. Tarnip is seldom mentioned and does not play any political role. Yet, it was a city that a king of Ešnunna boasted to have conquered in the 19th century. Qirdaḥat was conquered by Zimrī-Līm during the conquest of Ida-Maraš and part of its population was deported. It then lost its capital rank. It is seldom mentioned afterwards, but Zimrī-Līm stopped there on his famous (military) expedition to Ugarit *in order to muster his vassals*.

As for Zalluḥan, it was a town of secondary rank. It was occupied for a few years by an old Bensimalite ruler (Zakura-abum). The Bedouin presence was stronger in the southern part of Ida-Maraš. Benjaminites settled in the surroundings of Nagar (Tell Brak) (the land of Qā and Isqā). They were, however, in the minority in this region. At the end of Zimrī-Līm's reign, Bensimalites drove the king of Ašnakkum out of Tarnip, a clear sign of pressure from the bedouins.²⁵

Hurrian-speaking population elements were rather concentrated to the north, from Hazzikkanum to Ašlakkā. But the mix of population leads us to speak of a Hurro-Amorite society. The local language used by Haneans or sedentaries of nomadic descent was Amomite. Obviously Hurrian onomastics in the northern cities suggests an important place for

22 See FM VIII 3.

23 See Lyonnet 2000, 241–253.

24 See Charpin 2009, 59–74.

25 ARM XXVIII 104.

the Hurrian language. To be a representative (*hazannum*)²⁶ of Ašlakkā, one had to speak “Subarean”, i.e. Hurrian. The dominant cultural and political setting was, however, Semitic and the cultural language was of course Akkadian. One remembers that Yasmaḥ-Addu did not speak Amorite.²⁷

2 Symbiosis between Hana shepherds and Ida-Maraş farmers

There is a relative symbiosis between Bensimalite and sedentary shepherds. Bedouins came with their flocks to the towns to get grain after the harvest. In one case a group leaves the Qaṭṭunān province to go to Admatum in the Ašlakkā region.²⁸ We also see one of their groups go through Wadi Jaghjagh to milk and make cheese.²⁹ The gift of grain from farmers was accompanied by real ceremonies. The two different groups would meet in a given location. Bedouins would begin by offering their presents to city rulers. The Chief of Pasture would then give a speech praising the relationship between shepherds and farmers. Finally, farmers would present the Bedouins with bags filled with grain, hence called *še’um šepātum*.³⁰

On a regular basis Hana Bedouins and townspeople would organise covenantal ceremonies, which included a sacrifice of a donkey foal. In case of conflicts it was customary to recall the existence of these pacts called “donkey foal”. The flocks were then permitted to graze on land belonging to the settled population, and also given access to water. Hana families were allowed to reside in the midst of the settled population, but they risked being blackmailed in case of conflict between Bedouins and city rulers, which happened with the king of Ašnakum, Išme-Addu.

Such alliances offered mutual protection in the event of an external attack. In the specific setting of Zimri-Lîm’s time, Bedouins seem to have had a clear military advantage over their sedentary brothers. Very high tensions may have risen from this imbalance. Thus the Yaptur was often at odds with the Hana people, and it is in this land that a Bensimalite clan was massacred.³¹

²⁶ For this function, see Marti 2010, 154–162.

²⁷ See Charpin – Ziegler 2007, 55–77.

²⁸ ARM XXVII 20.

²⁹ Unpublished letter (M.6488).

³⁰ More examples in: Guichard (forthcoming) b.

³¹ See Durand 1988, 97–113.

3 The political and spatial organization of Ida-Maraš

In the western part of the Khabur, the most prominent cities from a political standpoint were Naḥur, Ašnakkum, Susā (or Šusā), Talḥayūm, and Ašlakkā. Urgiš, though without a king, except for a very short time, is also mentioned very often. Šinaḥ and Ḥurrā are often associated with it. There was also a king in Šuduḥum, Tarmanni, Anamaš, Zalluḥan, and so on. Even though there are a few attestations of Puṭrum (= Puṭrā), this city became important only after the reign of Zimrī-Līm, since Samsu-iluna mentioned it among his conquests in one of his year names.³² It was anyway located west of the Khabur Triangle.

By the time of Zimrī-Līm, Talḥayūm was not counted as part of the Ida-Maraš although the city is west of the Khabur Triangle. All other cities that are mentioned belong explicitly to the Ida-Maraš. Some have seen in Ida-Maraš either the name of a tribe that would have given its name to the Khabur Triangle,³³ or a descriptive name of the region meaning “Difficult side”.³⁴

The Ida-Maraš is a flexible city confederation. Elders and kings belonging to this political entity would meet on a regular basis, mainly to discuss military matters, it seems. They could thus help one of their members in case of a succession problem. There is no fixed location for these gatherings. Some kings of the Ida-Maraš had greater power than others. This was due to the importance and prestige of their city, but also to their own personality. The king of Ilān-šūrā (Haya-Sūmu), a city located east of the Jaghjagh, was their leader. Sammētar of Ašnakkum and Šüb-rām of Susā were among the great representatives of the Ida-Maraš. They were thus essential interlocutors for the king of Mari.

The Ida-Maraš was divided into several “regions”. Each of these regions was dominated by an urban center that hosted a royal family. Thus Ašnakkum represented the capital city of a country named Sūmum. Urgiš, Šinaḥ, Ḥurrā and Šuduḥum were its satellites. But these cities remained largely autonomous. The towns of the Sūmum had stronger links between themselves than with all other cities of the Ida-Maraš. Such a relationship must have been of a tribal nature. The Yaptur, which was originally part of the Ida-Maraš had a structure very similar to that of the land of Sūmum. Its capital city was Talḥayūm. The case of Susā is more complex. There are indications that Susa was south of Ašnakkum. But its king Šüb-rām also had authority over the Yaptur. This was according to Mari’s will, but contested in the Yaptur itself. There was an area to the north-east of the Ida-Maraš which must have been under the leadership of Naḥur. But the decline of Naḥur and its transformation into a Mari garrison probably allowed an extension of Ašlakkā. The place of Zalluḥan in this political space is not clear. Sammētar of Ašnakkum and Šüb-rām of Susā probably tried to bring the city within their power spheres.

32 See Horsnell 1999, 211.

33 For this question see Charpin 2003, 15–16.

34 “Le piedmont du Maraz”, Durand 1990, 7.

It is possible that political zones were structured around wadis. We know that the Sârum (perhaps modern Wadi Zerkan)³⁵ represented the boundary between Ida-Maraş and Yaptur. Likewise, we could imagine that kingdoms could stretch along the wadis. At first sight what we know of Tarnip-Aşnakkum and Qirdaḥat-Susa contradicts this possibility. We rather observe a discontinuity in political space. Was the Sūmum fragmented?

A demographic study of the texts has yet to be done. Political capital cities are called *ribêtum* or *alānu rabêtum*. But since a city such as Aşnakkum could easily be deprived of its inhabitants, we may doubt that the population was very dense in the “capital cities”. Naḥur was almost totally abandoned at the beginning of Zimri-Lim’s reign. A small group remained on its acropolis alone before a thousand people from Mari eventually settled there. The better-known cases of Zalluḥan and Šuduḥum show that the population was dispersed in villages. The city with its walls served first of all as a place of gathering and protection, as shown by the alerts described in several letters. Some of these *ribêtum*-cities with their palace and typical inhabitants could simply be great structures destined to host royal families.

The dispersion of the population in Ida-Maraş is the main characteristic that caught the nomads’ attention; they compared it to the dispersion of their sheep during transhumance.

4 Local institutions

The people of Ida-Maraş are regularly designated by the term *muškēnum*. The *ūmšarhum* category, translated “servant”, includes totally or partially that of the *muškēnum*. The *ūmšarhum* that we know are always attached to the service of a king or queen. They seem to be confused with the village people. They are potential victims of poor harvests and creditors, which occasion them to flee. Zakura-abum mentions an edict of *andurārum* decreed by the King of Mari. It was about the Ida-Maraş. But the case he mentions shows that all problems have not been overcome and all *umšarhum* have not come back to Zalluḥan.³⁶ The *umšarhum* could also plot against their king, as was the case in Zalluḥan.³⁷

There were merchants and craftsmen, but they are seldom mentioned,³⁸ while seemingly important commerce took place between Eluḥut and several cities on the plain, such as Urgiš, Šuduḥum and Hurrā.

Rural or urban communities were led by a *sugāgum* and elders. Urgiš, probably one of the most populated districts of the western Ida-Maraş, was ruled by a sovereign assembly. It was sometimes the sheikh who represented the city and sometimes the elders. At Urgiš, the

³⁵ See Guichard 2006.

³⁶ M.5413. See Durand 1998, 564.

³⁷ A.2822* (unpublished).

³⁸ ARM XXVIII III may mention a *kārum* in Šusā in broken context.

assembly could condemn a traitor to be stoned by the community.³⁹ We know that it took up numerous political initiatives during Zimrī-Līm's reign.

These "communal" institutions coexisted more or less easily with the families that had taken power. Male members of these families were called *mādarum*. In the city of Ašlakkā, seat of the royal residence of Ibāl-Addu, a *sugāgum* also performed his duties, but was deprived of any external representative role. Generals were very often close relatives of the kings.

Although the kings ruled over seemingly small territories, they insisted on bearing the title of king, *šarrum*. This in itself did not seem to pose a problem to a mighty king such as Zimrī-Līm. Of course he could assimilate them without telling it overtly to his *šāpiṭum* or *šaknum*. The legitimacy of the kings rested on a complex and unstable balance between hereditary right, popular support, and the suzerain's approval. The meaning of the frequent royal visits to Nagar, a city deprived of any political role, is shown by the documentation from Tall Leilan.⁴⁰ A king of Šuduḫum,⁴¹ the ephemeral king of Urgiš⁴² and a king of Tarmanni⁴³ referred to their visit to this place without mentioning the temple of the Lady of Nagar. It seems that this goddess brought them the divine help they sought.

The power of the kings of Ida-Maraš was limited. They could exercise their power in a consensual way only. We thus see Šüb-rām gather his subjects to ask for their opinion concerning his intent to go down to Mari. Unhappy with a plot against him in his kingdom, Zakura-abum offers to abdicate.⁴⁴ In Talḫayûm, the king Yawi-El was less successful. He was killed because of his subjects' betrayal. The city elders probably organized the coup.⁴⁵ This misadventure, which must have had numerous precedents, could explain why royal families stayed away from cities where communal power was too strong. Ašnakkum may fit in this category as we have seen. However, the disagreement between the king of Ašnakkum, Sammêtar, and the people of Urgiš had to lead to its reversal.

Royal families were like a pool of future kings. There was thus a rather strong competition among these *mādarum*. They assumed the right to declare war, although they had no throne. Thus, even a ruling king was always threatened by a rival in exile. Some successions were thus questioned, which gave rise to numerous conflicts of usually short duration. A family or a family branch could thus be deprived of its possessions overnight. The most typical case is that of Zakura-abum of Zalluḫan. This Bedouin leader had become king by forcefully taking the seat of the local dynastic ruler. The sons of the latter were then exiled to neighboring kingdoms.⁴⁶ They caused a lot of trouble to Zakura-abum during his short

39 See Guichard 2004.

40 See Eidem 2000, 255–264; Sasson 1997, 475–490.

41 M.9738: 3'.

42 ARM XXVIII 44bis. See Guichard 1997, 329–339.

43 Unpublished letter (A.3116).

44 A.2822* (unpublished).

45 See Guichard (forthcoming) c.

46 ARM XXVIII 53.

reign. He died suddenly, taken by a sickness. His son should have taken his place. He was quickly dealt with and replaced by Zakura-abum's rival.

These kings lived in fortified buildings, palaces where they kept their wives and meagre treasure. They had their own scribes whom they jealously kept. The affairs of the palace were handled by the *šukallum*, "vizier". There were notorious traitors among them. The scribe of Ibāl-Addu organized a plot against his master.⁴⁷ Zakura-abum escaped the upheaval of his own *šukallum*. One way for a king to extend his control over a territory was to spread his harem throughout several cities. That is what the kings of Ilān-šūrā⁴⁸ and Aš-lakkā did.⁴⁹

One last fundamental point must be underlined. The textual documentation confirms the observation made by the archaeologists in the field. The city population was very unstable. A city could be deserted overnight and be occupied again a few years later. In letters this phenomenon is called *ḫābirūtum*, that is, "emigration". The most spectacular case is that of Ašnakkum. A war was ongoing. The king of Ašnakkum felt threatened and preferred to move out with his family and wealth to his neighbour in Susā. Other inhabitants of Ašnakkum also began to leave the city. The one who witnessed this saw Ašnakkum become a mere place of bivouac.⁵⁰ A city that was unhappy with its suzerain could threaten to emigrate. This phenomenon generated the existence of numerous *ḫābiru*. An unpublished document indicates that all the kings of Ida-maraš had *ḫābiru* in their armies. Among the leaders of these *ḫābiru* was a man named Asqur-Addu. He was probably a *mādarum* whose purpose was to get back his lost city of Naḥur. Another typical leader, Samsī-Erah, was a commoner who had given himself the right to declare war. He and his band of *ḫābiru* were responsible for the death of Yawi-El at Talḫayûm and for looting the city of Susā and helping the people of Mari to fight against the Elamites; he was subsequently murdered in an ambush. His brother became the leader of the group and engaged in similar activities.⁵¹

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Upper Khabur region or Ida-Maras of northern Mesopotamia can be characterized as politically fragmented during the early second millennium BC. Textual evidence offers an interesting perspective on this area, which at times was under the hegemony of the Mari kingdom. The overlords from Mari sometimes replaced local rulers with their own vassals, leading to constant conflicts with local people and local forms of government.

47 For this affair see ARM XXVIII 53.

48 This information comes from one of the unpublished letters of Itûr-asdu, Mari's governor.

49 See Ziegler 1999, 1–26.

50 A.2434: 32'. See Guichard 2009, 114–115.

51 Guichard 2011, 29–93.

The political history of the Ida-Maraş is not easily written due to this political fragmentation, but it is clear that it was a flexible confederation of kings and elders. Some cities were governed by a sovereign assembly, while others were led by elders or sheikhs. The kings ruled over small territories, yet their power was overall fragile due to the turbulent political history of the area.

Texts also tell us about the ways in which nomads (“bedouins”) interacted closely with the sedentary farmers through peaceful exchange of goods. Although they constituted two distinct political communities, their relationship can be described as a symbiosis due to the important exchange between livestock and agricultural products, which was important to both communities.

There is also evidence for the presence of Hurrian speaking people that were concentrated to the north of the area and most likely mixed closely with Amorites.

Last but not least, one should note the observation that the city population was generally unstable, indicating frequent migrations of city populations (*ḥābirūtum*), which often took place due to armed conflicts or economic crises in the area.

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III Cultural Landscapes – Regional Diversity vs. Political Unity

Marginal and Steppic Areas as Sources for Archaeological Debate: A Case for “Active Symbiosis” of Town and Country

Introduction

The division of landscapes suggested by the organisers of this conference is a striking one. Whereas the first, *constituent space* comprises the base, that is, the actual physical surroundings, the other two are divisions of an entirely socio-political and socio-economic nature, and the word “space” there is entirely conceptual. Into these conceptual spaces, the organisers have placed “raw topics”, providing concrete handles for the nitty-gritty, i.e. actual subjects for papers. Since the scene is set in Northern Mesopotamia and Northern Syria, the actual space we are dealing with (the constituent space) partly has a steppe character, and partly concerns a marginal area in terms of agriculture: it hovers around the 200mm isohyet. The present paper devotes itself to what is called confederate space, mainly discussing aspects of raw topics 3 and 8, i.e. “nomadism” and political structures.

Archaeological analogies with present or sub-recent ethnographic datasets are famously full of pitfalls, and this goes *a fortiori* for studies about nomadic ways of life. Apart from such analogies, however, virtually our only source for the nomadic way of life in the ancient Near Eastern Middle Bronze Age – which is the period I am concerned with here – is the textual evidence from Mari. Unfortunately, rich as that material may be, for the purpose at hand it is not ideal. It is no secret that these texts were written with the bias of a settled urban population, who were mainly concerned with procuring the results of the cultivation of wheat and barley, and who concentrated on the sustained effort to safeguard their resources, the fields, the water and the concomitant infrastructure. The texts may therefore at least be suspected of not reflecting the situation outside the towns in a balanced way. The bias opposed the settled, urban society of kings, civil servants, soldiers, craftsmen and traders, to the other sector, the roaming tribes said to be basically inimical to the settled urban centres, the unruly “nomads” with their sheep and goats, who often had to be forced “to see reason” by the troops of the urbanites. Additionally, also our modern way of evaluating the texts is sometimes biased. Even after what Larsen wrote about perceptions induced by ancient texts,¹ the latter are often still treated as if they yield direct, “positive” (= positivistic) knowledge.

* Universiteit Leiden. This contribution contains phrases from a paper read at the Paris ICAANE of 2002; since the latter’s publication seems to have been indefinitely postponed, I feel free to use some of my earlier text here. Since 2002 two major pertaining publications have appeared: Nicolle 2004 and Szuchman 2009, both containing papers which argue parallel themes; yet I think that my (adapted) ideas from 2002 still deserve wider publicity.

1 Larsen 1988, 174f.

I am not suggesting that anyone has recently denied the importance of the socio-economic role of those population elements that are described as less settled. Nonetheless a certain scientific bias still persists toward those roamers.² Often they are treated rather indifferently or cavalierly, probably because they are difficult to grasp compared to what the texts and archaeology can tell us about settled people.

Terminology

In order to clarify the terms used, I think we may safely exclude *nomadism* as such from our overview. This is because this term has been used both as too general and as too specific. Taking up the latter, specific meaning, I would like to define *nomadism* here as a way of life *entirely* dependent on non-sedentary exploitation of available natural resources.³ Khazanov⁴ discussed the difficulty of distinguishing between nomads and pastoralists. Wirth⁵ had discussed this point earlier, and he was followed closely in an overview by Van Driel, who decided to use *nomads* anyway, conceiving of them as sprinkled with “an ample dose of ethnicity”.⁶ However, I prefer to distinguish between *pastoralists* and *nomads*, and will from now on speak of *pastoralists* in the context of the Middle Bronze Age in Northern Mesopotamia and Syria. Excluding *Nomadism*, for the region and period concerned, rests on my conviction that there simply was too little space for anyone to roam about forever, even for small groups: the available land had been, or was in the process of being “colonised” by urban-induced rule, leaving little room for an existence entirely based on hunting, gathering, or other pastimes devoted to structurally unsettled subsistence.⁷

Pastoralism denotes a way of living which mainly involves the herding of animals; sometimes it is sub-understood that the herders travel over long distances and periods, but this is certainly not a necessary condition, either conceptually or in reality. The herding is done, everywhere in the world, in areas where either there is no fixed plant cultivation going on, or where such cultivation leaves fodder on the fields after the harvest. Especially in the latter case there must be a necessary understanding between the owners of the land in question and the pastoralists. The important thing is, that the practice of herding (and of animal husbandry in general) is tied in with the socio-economic life of the settled cultivators.

The term *transhumance* has been coined a long time ago for a specific kind of pastoralism, i.e. one where certain itineraries are repeatedly followed by a circumscribed group

2 See now also Bernbeck 2008, 44f.

3 The OED defines nomadism as: “The practice, fact or state of living a wandering life”. Pastoralist: “(...) of or pertaining to shepherds or their occupation”. Transhumance: “seasonal moving of livestock to regions of different climate”.

4 Khazanov 1984, 19–24.

5 Wirth 1971, 254–271.

6 Van Driel 2001, 88. On ethnicity, see below. See now also Khazanov 2009.

7 Meijer 2000.

of people in a set seasonal pattern. Until recently the Yörük in southern Turkey⁸ provided a good example, to limit ourselves to the general neighbourhood.

This is quite different from something still witnessed today: the seasonal movement with herds of sheep and goats over relatively long distances (e.g., from Palmyra to the north Syrian Jazirah) by specialized herders, who are paid for this service by entirely sedentarized, urban-based herd-owners. One could call this phenomenon *contract herding*. It is probable that this occurred also in the Syrian Middle Bronze Age, and we know it from other sources as well, e.g. from the Ur III texts. Theoretically, such contract herding might be practiced by whole families or “tribes”, but they would be confined to certain specific itineraries and seasonal periods, in both cases by order of the owners. To my mind the important difference both in terminology and in kind is predicated on *ownership of the herds*: contrasted with this contract herding, we speak of *pastoralists* when the herders are the owners of the animals they herd as a way of sustenance.

If then, for the sake of clarity and simplicity, we agree on calling those who practice animal husbandry in Northern Syria and Mesopotamia pastoralists, are we to view them as an ethnic group or as a more general kind of *ad hoc* grouping of people in a reaction to fluctuating resources? And to what extent can archaeology contribute anything useful to these questions?

Ethnicity and tribes

The 44th *Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* in Leiden was devoted to the theme of ancient oriental ethnicity, of course treated mainly from the point of view of the ancient cuneiform texts.⁹ Texts indeed would seem to be the primary source for a classification of the ancient social structures and processes, but as was perhaps to be expected, during this *Rencontre* the highly interesting discussions did not proceed very far beyond disagreement on the content of the term *ethnicity* and the exposition of differences in, e.g., “tribal” names. Are we trying to denote shared language, symbolism and creed, history, sustenance strategies or territoriality, or specific combinations of these facets?

Modern usage of the term ethnicity has evolved from purely anthropological definitions to a widely used, politically laden concept reflecting the socio-political tensions that exist in many countries of the modern world.¹⁰ Furthermore, also in our modern world, the content and perception of ethnic descriptions can change radically through time. For in-

8 Bates 1973.

9 The *Rencontre* in Leiden was held in 2002, and published in van Soldt et al. 2005.

10 Our modern concept of ethnicity, laden with these tensions and connotations of discrimination, probably developed as a result of the strong feelings of nationalism that have been fostered and manipulated since the middle of the nineteenth century AD, but especially since the breakdown of traditional colonialism and the resulting emergence of new states after the Second World War.

stance, where once, just after the Second World War, the qualification “Italian” or “Japanese” stood for shoddy products, within 30 years (!) the connotation had changed to stylish and well-made, advanced products; the way the people behind these products were perceived changed in the same vein. Since our gauge of chronology in the ancient Near East is infinitely coarser, we should be careful in viewing all mentions of such entities as “the Amorites” in one and the same light. It would therefore seem best to restrict our use of the term and concept ethnicity to those occasions where we can show that ancient rulers or parties *manipulated* the “otherness” of others in order to achieve their political or socio-economic goals. At least this modern understanding of the term gives us a definite framework, an agreement on the basis of which to disagree; it is after all *our* perception of the past that we are trying to formulate, in order to investigate subsequently whether and how it can be tested.

It turns out that it is difficult to find cases where such an “otherness” was indeed used to thwart the ideals of specific groups in the ancient Near East, or to further one’s own aims at someone else’s cost. The Amorites are the best known ethnic grouping we can isolate in the Ancient Near East for our period of concern. Thus, taking Shibutani – Kwan’s definition as our point of departure,¹¹ the question of ethnicity in our context of the Middle Bronze Age Syria and Mesopotamia is essentially reduced to the question whether these Amorites can be said to have practiced pastoralism as their main method of economic sustenance, and were discriminated because of it.

The Amorites and their sub-divisions were seen by others as recognizable entities, they probably saw themselves as such, and their genealogy was at times emphasized. Furthermore the ancients distinguished between the Amorite language and their various own ones, and in modern linguistics we speak of an Amorite onomasticon. But how pervasive was this distinction in practice, especially as denoting a different way of life in a specific region? This is difficult to gauge. The distinction sometimes made between Amorites and Akkadians in some contexts is striking,¹² but again, no strong discrimination in the modern sense can be noted. Such often repeated notions that “they did not bury their dead, they lived in tents” etc. are obvious contradistinctions to the urban, settled way of life, undoubtedly used to bolster the cohesive spirit of the urban, settled population, perhaps even to indoctrinate one’s city-based subjects against these unruly dangers from the steppe. But how closely correlated were the notions of “Amorite” (or their sub-divisions, like the Tidanum) and “unruly danger from the steppe” really for the man in the street, at a time when

11 Shibutani – Kwan 1965, 47: “... a number of people who see themselves as similar with regards to shared heritage, whether genuine or supposed, and who are regarded by others as such”. “Heritage” here is quite imprecise. See, e.g., Emberling – Yoffee 1999, but also Buccellati’s remarks about our difficulties of gauging the content of “tribal names”, like that of the *Yaminites* (Buccellati 1990, 105f.).

12 See for instance Charpin 2001, 28, where Hammurabi of Babylon on his seal calls himself “king of Amurru (..) son of Sin-muballit whose heir (he is), king of Akkad”, suggesting that as king of Amurru he is also king, like his father, of Akkad.

the Amorites were accepted in the higher echelons of society?¹³ Although the Amorites were in principle identifiable as a group, many of them lived in towns, and it seems they were not consistently segregated nor noticeably discriminated against in any special way.

A different side of this same ethnic coin is that nothing prevents us from assuming that also a sizeable number of Hurrian-speaking people were professionally engaged in animal husbandry in the region – we simply do not know, especially concerning the very beginning of the second millennium. These Hurrians were certainly there, however.¹⁴ In this context it is worth pointing out, against Zohar and Buccellati,¹⁵ that correlating a specific way of life with a language group is a self-defeating proposition; this is true *a fortiori* of cases where the only language trace left us to judge from consists in deficiently written texts. Thus the pastoralist way of life cannot be said to be *ethnically ascribable* with any degree of certainty, nor is there any solid evidence that this way of life led to systematic discrimination. In the same vein, when we speak of *tribes* the association of the word is often that of the sub-recent *Bedouin*. There, specific forms of familial cohesion and decision structures obtained, as well as specific combinations of nomadism and sedentism.¹⁶ A high degree of mobility is ascribed to them, predicated on fast animals such as the camel and the horse. Neither animal was in use during the period we are discussing. In short, the concept of tribe is another one that is difficult, and using it may cloud issues.

13 See Buccellati 1966, esp. 325f. and 337f. and, on the question of propagandistic mention, 336. Silluš-Dagan for example was an Amorite governor of Simurru during the Ur III period. During the subsequent Isin-Larsa and Old Babylonian periods Amorites were to be found in all levels of Mesopotamian and Syrian society, as is well known. I suggest below that the mention of the *limes* (*muriq Tidnim*) against the Tidanium built by Šulgi and Šušin may be seen as propaganda measures taken in times of economic imbalance, as are, e.g., the derogatory remarks about the Gutis found in the Curse of Agade (cf. Schwartz 1995, 250). In these instances one could perhaps make a case for conscious discrimination, but the question remains whether (and how) the measures were perceived by the general population, and whether they reached, beyond mere propaganda, into the field of socio-economic consequences.

14 The presence of Hurrians (i.e., Hurrian speaking people) is well attested for the later third millennium, and since a “Hurrian nation” exists in the second half of the second millennium there can be no doubt that also in the first half of the second millennium there were Hurrians in Northern Syria and Northern Mesopotamia, and they were not confined to cities (cf. next note). Cf. also Lion 1996 (I am very grateful to Prof. D. Charpin for this reference). For the Middle Assyrian period, see e.g. Freydank 1980.

15 Zohar 1992, esp. 175; Buccellati 1990, 110. There, on page 109 Buccellati hypothesizes that ancient usage of the term *Hurrian* might be reserved for urban populations, but as he indicates, there is no evidence for such a distinction.

16 E.g., Musil 1928, von Oppenheim 1939, Thesiger 1959. An overview of the Amorites by M. Streck provides some thoughts about the tribal structure of this ethnic group (Streck 2002).

“Dimorphism”

Among the many merits of the important article by Buccellati¹⁷ on what he calls the nomadisation of the middle Euphrates, his emphasis on the differences between the south, middle and the north of Syria in terms of the causes of pastoralism (as represented in his fig. 6) is important. Yet his implicit association¹⁸ of “autonomous pastoralism” with Amorites is, I think, subject to qualification on two counts: first, referring to the discussion above, we should be less ready to take such ethnic associations for granted; second, the term *autonomous pastoralism* suggests, to my mind, a form of existence that is too one-sided to be practicable, even for the relatively well-known region around Mari.¹⁹

Elsewhere I have discussed my hypothesis that it is not by accident that many important sites (towns and cities) in Northern Syria and Northern Mesopotamia are situated in the marginal zone where rain-fed agriculture on the one hand does not quite provide a dependable basis throughout the years, and where on the other hand irrigation on a large scale is impracticable.²⁰ It is here that people easily revert to emphasis on the complementary husbanding of herds, when natural causes such as bad harvests or social factors such as taxes or other kinds of coercion force them to. For them, it means a shifting emphasis rather than a structural change of lifestyle, since some of them were always engaged in herding anyway. We are dealing with an area where the lie of the land favours animal husbandry. There were sufficient water holes and wadis, there was vegetation along these and along the main rivers, and sufficient pasture still left between the regions of cereal cultivation (pasture to be used in covenant with the owners of the land). It is also the area where closest contact is possible between those involved in both production modes and the markets of the towns, that is, where the connecting traffic faces the shortest routes.

Although the land for pasture was at this time always claimed to belong to one of the centres (or rather to private owners living in these centres – we do not have sufficient information on landownership in this region), these centres needed the pastoral element as much as the latter needed the former. Returning to those population elements that are usually described as moving about and nomadic and distinct from the settled population, I think that Rowton’s “dimorphism” should be adapted and used in a different vein than he imagined.²¹ For the region and period under consideration we should take up and adapt an old idea, discussed for instance by Adams,²² and view the complementary ways of life called agriculture and pastoralism as two sides of the same coin, that is, handled by the same

17 Buccellati 1990.

18 Buccellati 1990, 109.

19 See Charpin 1991, 11f., where, however, a rather strict division between “agriculteurs sédentaires” and “pasteurs nomades” is maintained.

20 Meijer 1999.

21 Summarized, e.g., in Rowton 1980, with literature.

22 Adams 1974.

“families”. Something similar is described by Hole for the Zagros region in modern times, as well as for the Syrian steppe around Lake Assad by Kaplanian and by Lewis.²³ The towns and cities served as market places, where products from both sides, and news, were exchanged.

But what has not been emphasized so far, I think, is that these markets should not be seen as places of exchange between the settled and the unsettled, but, more comprehensively, as markets for all kinds of products produced by several producers from the same mixed backgrounds. Families or lineages A and B and C all exchanged goods from mixed backgrounds, pastoral and agricultural, undoubtedly specializing, but specializing in *quality* rather than in *kind* of produce. There is ample room for such a hypothesis since it is, for instance, not often specified from where products for the Mari palace arrive there, or what part of the economy they represent: are they self-produced on palace land, are they a form of tax (tithes), tribute, extraction, or purchase? Of course cereals and wool as well as other products are mentioned, but we would like to know much more about their places of origin, and how they were procured for the palace. The king and other members of the elite owned fields in the countryside from which they derived their products, and it is surmised that the people working those fields were employed by the field owners, but this still leaves gigantic parts of the local economy unaccounted for: were they employed as serfs, or as paid day-workers, as tenants, and how did the man in the street in the towns procure his sustenance? Such aspects remain unclear for the moment, despite such important studies as Reuleau 2008 and 2009 on the relations between town and countryside around Mari.

It is also important to realize that “the town” generally mentioned in these contexts is a posited extension of “the palace”, since in the present case no detailed information other than that of the palace is available: the evidence discussed so far derives from the cuneiform texts from the palace. Town and country, or urban and rural, are oppositions which easily predispose us toward certain social connotations, such as educated vs. wild, ruler vs. ruled or consumer vs. producer. Although in the minds of the townspeople there existed something like the opposition between *namlakatum* and *nawûm*, this does not mean that the two could not overlap.²⁴ “Rural” should, I think, only neutrally be used in opposition to “urban”, and in my view it includes plant cultivation and animal husbandry as well as an important degree of settled life. Hence I find that the traditional view, which opposes *settled* and *unsettled*, is too monolithic. Although it appears from the Mari texts that genuine conflict

23 Hole 1978; Kaplanian 1973 (this MA thesis remains unpublished, but a summary can be found in Van Loon 2001, 607–648); Lewis 1987. See also the summary in Schwartz 1995, and the discussion in Meadow 1992, 263f.

24 The opposition is treated in Charpin 2004, esp. 84. Charpin interprets *namlakatum* rather more pointedly than Von Soden (AHw): “domaine peuplé de sédentaires” vs. “Herrschaftsgebiet”. *Nawûm* means *pastureland* or *steppe*. In fact Charpin stipulates that the Mari texts themselves do not mention this opposition, it is so far only attested in texts from Tall Leilan (l.c. note 7). In the locus he cites, however (Eidem 1987/8, 118), the association of *nawûm* and *namlakatum* may easily be seen as emphasizing the totality of possessions of the person called Mutiya. It is often the case in ancient Near Eastern enumerations that such totalities comprise overlapping entities as well as extremes like “alpha” and “omega”.

could occur between, e.g., the urban government and the ‘sheikhs’ of the people in the steppe, we might easily see this in terms of frustrated attempts by the ruling class of the city (who wrote the texts) to get a grip on every aspect of the lives of those not living within the immediate perimeter of the administration centre. Rather than speak of an opposition between *settled* and *unsettled*, we should therefore, as said above, speak of an opposition between *town* and *country*. The country, being filled with villages, hamlets and farmsteads which provided the towns and cities with their necessary items, and being subjected politically to administration attempts from the cities for that very reason, had always known a mixed economy²⁵ where animal husbandry and cereal cultivation were necessarily combined, if only for the by-feeding of the herds of goats and sheep with barley. This mixed character of rural villages has in fact been known for a long time already, but it seems to have been snowed under by the persisting and I think rather tendentious French translation of *hana** in Mari texts with *nomades*, which is then without further ado taken up as *nomads* in English, and *Nomaden* in German.²⁶

Recapitulating, we have towns on the one hand, and the countryside on the other, and it is in this countryside that one is dealing with villages and hamlets, from where parts of the (presumably extended) families could set out for longer periods with the herds. They had their base in these settlements, but moved about frequently. The sheikhs in the Mari texts are almost always called “man of ...”, where the place name involved clearly shows that these men had their bases in villages or even towns.

In this view, the incursions into the alluvium by the tribe of the *Tidanum* and the like, mentioned by the Ur III kings Šulgi and Šusin, might perhaps be seen as such occasions when the North Syrian and North Mesopotamian herdsman apparently had reason to roam wider, and advance on the alluvium.²⁷ The causes may have been political or economic: for the former we know of no easily identifiable reason yet, the latter can be sought in something like bad harvests and resulting famine (for which there is some sort of evidence only somewhat later, towards the end of Ibbi-Sin’s reign – albeit there for southern Mesopotamia). We would, for this case of the *Tidanum*, be dealing with a special instance, on an extended scale, of a phenomenon that occurred very often on a smaller scale.

25 At least since the middle of the third millennium BC, cf. Meijer 2000.

26 See R. Kupper s.v. *Hana* in RIA IVI 1972, 75, citing ARM VIII no. 11. See also the comments on that text by Matthews 1978, 34. 69. 110. Stol 2004, 645f. uses the German term *Nomaden*. In his RIA contribution, Kupper calls the *Hana* people “semi-nomades”, and clearly attributes mixed ways of life to them.

27 Meijer 1999.

Archaeology and “movers”

Much has recently been written about the possibilities and difficulties of identifying nomads and pastoralists through material remains.²⁸ Traces of seasonal camps in the steppe are ephemeral and may have vanished throughout the millennia that have passed since the period of concern: they have suffered from being walked over, as well as from extended cultivation through motorized irrigation, and also through transformation into more permanent settlements even into our own times. For the region between Deir ez-Zor and Abu Kemal, for instance, Reculeau mentions the number of at least 86 rural sites known from the Mari texts, whereas archaeology only revealed 27 so far.²⁹

In the present case, if we agree that most pastoralists had a home in the existing and identifiable villages, the implication is that little – or at least less than in the case of “real” constantly moving nomads – durable stuff would have been taken along on their trips: they left the cumbersome things at home, to be used by the remainder of the family or to be stored. The only trace one would find of their specific way of life might be sought in exaggerated amounts of storage space, animal bones, and other indirect evidence *in* those settlements. But what does exaggerated mean here?

I am afraid that we simply have no way to gauge relative amounts of “pastoralism” going on through archaeological means. Although we can hypothesize certain amounts of static emphasis on one aspect or another, and may even think we notice dynamic shifts between those aspects,³⁰ it is often on the basis of very little, badly comparable, and highly unrepresentative material that we do so. And, unfortunately, we also do it with a terminology that proves difficult to agree on.

But what contribution can archaeology make on the positive side? Since the seventies a number of surface surveys have been conducted (notably mostly along or close to major rivers and wadis), and a limited number of excavations added significantly to our database. The aggregate impression one gains from the surveys is that settlement in the Jazirah fluctuated between ca. 2300 and 1700 BC, but showed a general increase in the last 100 years of that period. Explanation, however, proves to be a different matter.³¹ Our increasing knowledge now necessitates more pointed and better informed questions than in the fifties, when Kupper’s seminal and ground-breaking study of the *Nomads ... in the time of the kings of Mari* appeared, which may be acknowledged as the basis for all subsequent research. The

28 Cf. Banning – Köhler-Rollefson 1992, Bartl 1999, Bernbeck 1993, Cole 1975, and Cribb 1991, to name but a few authors.

29 Reculeau 2009, 72.

30 Cf., e.g., McCorriston’s Fibre Revolution (McCorriston 1997), Zeder’s Specialized Herding (Zeder 1998).

31 A recent Leiden dissertation evaluates modern data on surveys in the region (Wossink 2009, 134f.). For the Balikh region the MB II period shows the highest population increase; the Birecik region shows a lower increase at that time, but the more easterly Jazirah again shows a large increase – as was already suggested in Meijer 1986. There are, however, important micro-regional differences. Wossink sets the increase in settlement off against site size; the overall conclusion supports what I call the “filling up” of the region with small sites.

increased archaeological knowledge shows up fascinating and enticing discrepancies. It is striking that the area west of the Jaghjagh, for instance, in a survey conducted by Bertille Lyonnet (2000), produced little Khabur ware, which is seen as a hallmark of Middle Bronze Age occupation. Yet, a survey by me³² to the east of that river showed up rather more of that material, whereas the two regions do not look very different at all at first sight. We do neither know what is at play here, nor how good a gauge Khabur ware really is for the Middle Bronze Age.³³ Similarly, an intensive survey around Tall Baydar seems to indicate that occupation there in the MBA was scant. Why, since the EB occupation is clearly so well established? At first sight, then, archaeological data may not directly be conducive to detailed interpretation of the past. Yet, these data can perhaps be tied into the question of the character of the settlement and the way the settlers fed themselves.

Conclusion

The interpretation of rural life given above, in which a *not-so-specialized pastoralism* is suggested for the Syrian Jazirah during the Middle Bronze Age, cannot be proven with direct evidence. It is a hypothesis, and the result of reading between the cuneiform lines and looking at the modern world, in combination with survey and excavation data. Survey data suggest that at least the Balikh Valley knew a relatively constant, sometimes increasing amount of settled area, and excavations at Hammam at-Turkman suggest a flourishing regional centre.³⁴ More to the east such data are somewhat equivocal. If specialized pastoralism, or even nomadism as defined above, had developed in the region and period under discussion, one of the concomitant archaeologically recognizable effects should be the dissolution of settlements, provided there were no sudden increase in population; for if there had been such a vast and sudden influx one could make a case for pastoralists who made out that extra, invisible population. But the latter possibility is discarded on the basis of the discussion in Meijer 2000: there, an increase in *settled*, i.e. visible population is reckoned with, but their livelihood is taken to have consisted of the mixture of cultivation and herding advocated above, sprinkled with doses of trade. The important variable in our hypothesis is the noted increase in settlement, the “filling up” of the countryside with centres that claim suzerainty over their region, and with their dependent villages and hamlets.

This argument also shows where more work is needed: intensive surveys of the countryside in such areas as that between the valleys of the Balikh and Khabur, along the

32 Meijer 1986.

33 Both questions are now treated in Wossink 2009, 97.

34 Both phenomena are discussed in Meijer 2007. In the northern Balikh Valley there is an increase from EB IV to MB II from 16 sites with an aggregate of 35.5 ha. settled area to 39 sites with an aggregate of 54.4 ha. During the same period the southern half of the valley shows respectively 11 sites for 25.4 ha, and 24 sites for 35.2 ha. Cf. now also Wossink 2009, 87f.

200mm isohyet. It is here that a better understanding of the relationship is needed between the known regional and interregional centres (e.g., Hammam, Chuera, Beydar) and any amount of smaller settlements still to be found. These surveys should then be extended southwards into the veritable steppe-area.

Above I repeated my conviction that important urban centres sprouted up just in those areas where, because of the marginal character of the area in terms of rain-fed agriculture, the contact of crop-cultivators and herdsman was optimal: this border areas of steppic regions. There, logistically speaking, everyone had to expend the least effort to meet, and trade followed the routes connecting those places. Towns like Aleppo, Damascus, Hama, Ebla, Tall Chuera and also smaller towns like Hammam al-Turkman lie in or close to this zone of the marginal 300–200mm annual rainfall. These major and minor sites became surrounded with hamlets. One imagines townsmen receiving – in the town market – the produce of the herders, and the latter perhaps acquiring tools and other handicraft products. The increased number of settlements as compared to what we see in the later phases of the Early Bronze Age, also in rural areas further away from towns, and increasingly also in these steppe areas, suggests that a much more variegated situation obtained than has been hitherto imagined. The major centres had by now claimed all the available usable land, be it agricultural or for pasture. The domesticated camel had not yet been introduced, making the crossing of genuine desert areas less feasible. Centres such as Mari tried to control the usable countryside since it was their produce garden, and since settled people are easier to control than roamers, settlement was encouraged. There is room, I think, for expanding this view, as a hypothesis, to the following picture with a resulting change of perspective.

Villages and hamlets in the countryside were inhabited by people of mixed ethnic affiliation. Such people were engaged in both agriculture and pastoralism, i.e. crop cultivation and herding animals, some for themselves, some perhaps in the service of urban institutions such as a palace. Markets, both in the major towns and between the smaller settlements were provisioned with mixed produce, i.e. from both agriculture and the herd in a non-specialized way. I think we are dealing with non-specialized pastoralism, *pace* Buccellati 1990.

Already in my Paris paper (see note 1) I mentioned Geyer's work in the steppe south-east of Aleppo as providing important opportunities for further research into the question of steppe settlement.³⁵ The subsequent excavations of Castel and her team in the *fayda* site of Rawdah have started to do just that.³⁶ So-called *fayda*'s are places in the steppe where the little rain that does fall, through the particular configuration of the soil, is collected and provides a sufficient reservoir under the surface for limited, but not necessarily very small-

35 Geyer 2001.

36 E.g. Castel 2005.

scale agriculture.³⁷ The town of Rawdah existed on agriculture and herding, and trade, between ca. 2500 and 2000 BC, i.e. it became deserted at the beginning of our period of concern, but the potential of sites like Rawdah for our discussion is obvious. We clearly need more concentrated survey and excavation in the areas formerly neglected as unfeasible for habitation. This to see if perhaps, even if only for short periods per site, such temporary *fayda*-settlements did not exist in much greater numbers and in much more inhospitable areas than we thought; that would then facilitate the realization of the picture painted above, where even in the steppe formerly thought uninhabitable, there were settlements or hamlets, where people from the same families engaged in mixed farming and animal husbandry.

As a result, the opposition *settled vs. nomadic* would be replaced by the less stringent opposition *urban-rural*. Obviously a certain amount of “contrast” could indeed be felt by both the urbanites who wrote the texts and by the rural people, since like everywhere, producers resist attempts at control of their resources by others. I think it is more realistic, on the basis of archaeological data such as settlement distribution, to suggest that these rural producers lived in villages and hamlets from where they practiced cultivation *as well as* pastoralism, and from where they traded or delivered their produce when necessary.

Instead of Rowton’s *dimorphism*, which still suggests a sharp division, I would therefore prefer a term like *active symbiosis*. It provides a wider scope for the intricate productive interplay of rural elements among themselves as well as with the population of urban centres – who were after all directly dependent on the countryside for their food. Much of this hypothetical picture rests, of course, on our gauge of who owned land, labour and transport. Therefore it is clear that future work should be two-pronged: archaeologists and geomorphologists should intensively concentrate their efforts on steppe areas, and philologists should concentrate on matters of ownership and use of land and animals in the period under consideration. The admirably liberal policies of the Syrian General Directorate of Antiquities, and hopefully those of its Iraqi counterpart in the very near future, will no doubt facilitate such progress in both fields. It is fascinating to see how the same tracts of land can be used in such different ways and within such different socio-economic frameworks throughout history. The *Bedouin* who roamed the area in sub-recent times have unwittingly defined our perception of what *pastoral nomadism* in the Ancient Near East should have looked like, but they formed only one in a long series of social constellations in the area. I hope that a term like *active symbiosis* will prove to represent Middle Bronze Age pastoralism more realistically.

37 Cf. Geyer 2001, 57.

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Settled Space. Evidence for Changes in Settlement Patterns of Northern Mesopotamia at the Advent and at the Turn of the Mittani Era

[...] interpretations of patterns of settlement and demographic trends are only as good as the quality of survey data retrieval.¹

1 Introduction

Regional settlement studies are often based on the results of field surveys. Thus, in attempting to provide an overview of surveys concerning the second millennium BC in Northern Mesopotamia it is necessary to start with some methodological remarks, despite the fact that many archaeologists are familiar with at least some of the reservations that I will subsequently present. Recently, Tony Wilkinson² and Arne Wossink³ offered a similar evaluation, and therefore I will only comment on those issues that are the most relevant for the present study.

The most important and the most discussed point is the accuracy in identifying the occupation of a particular period and in determining the importance/size of the related settlement during the survey. As is well known, several factors may influence identifying the occupation as being from a particular period: later deposits can conceal earlier occupations; site erosion and soil aggradation lead to the physical loss of materials; smaller, flat sites are sometimes impossible to identify in the archaeological record; or the sample does not include the full range of pottery that is typical for a particular period.

The concealment of earlier sites by later settlement strata is a process that is not uniform and that depends on the settlement history of a particular area⁴. According to Wilkinson,⁵ most of the sites located in the Khabur Area ceased to be occupied at the end of the third millennium. While the pre-Bronze Age levels are often obscured, later (i.e. second and first millennium BC) settlements are more easily identified. In a small number of sites that were occupied until the Islamic period Prehistoric, Bronze Age and Early Iron Age remains may be invisible.

* Institute of Prehistory, Adam Mickiewicz University of Poznań.

¹ Wilkinson 2000a, 221.

² Wilkinson 2000a.

³ Wossink 2009, 45–55.

⁴ Wossink 2009, 47.

⁵ Wilkinson 2000a, 229.

Physical loss of sites due to erosion or soil aggravation is probably limited in northern Mesopotamia and appears to have occurred mainly during the 4th millennium BC,⁶ thus rarely affecting later sites.

Archaeological surveys in Mesopotamia tend to concentrate on high, tell-like sites, making small or flat sites difficult to identify. Surveys only rarely include a full coverage of the area surveyed. This attitude has changed recently with the application of aerial and high resolution satellite imagery; pictures of this kind enable the identification of flat or even buried sites whose presence can be later verified in the field by surveys. Yet attempts to make a full coverage survey demonstrate that this method is also not fully effective.⁷

The chronological identification of the settlement periods of a given site is based on the ability to identify and date pottery sherds. The results of a survey depend on knowledge of the diagnostic pottery material for subsequent cultural periods. In the second millennium there are three cultural units: the Khabur Ware period (generally speaking, the first half of the second millennium BC), the Mittani period (mid second millennium down to the 14th century BC) and the Middle Assyrian period (14th – 11th century BC). While pottery belonging to this first cultural unit is easily recognizable because a significant percentage of sherds are decorated with characteristic painted patterns, the two other periods are much more difficult to identify. This difficulty has had a considerable influence on the results of earlier surveys. For instance, Diederik Meijer in his North-East Syria survey carried out in 1976, divided the MBA period pottery into two groups, painted pottery (Khabur Ware) and plain pottery, but did not distinguish between Mittani and Middle Assyrian pottery, instead using a single designation: LBA period.⁸ Moreover, the published drawings of the LBA sherds included only five variants of bowls (though, of course, only a small sample of material was represented among the illustrations provided⁹). As a result, his publication is of no use for my study. Wilkinson and Tucker, summing up their Northern Jazireh Survey, remarked that: “[the] degree of decline [of settlement during the LBA period] may be exaggerated by the lower visibility of the Middle Assyrian Pottery”.¹⁰ While they differentiated Mittani and Middle Assyrian material, the number of index fossils used was limited, which might have had a significant effect on their conclusions. For instance, only three pottery types were taken into account for the Mittani period: Nuzi Ware, stump bases, and fine painted goblets,¹¹ while ignoring red band plates, which seem to be as typical of the Mittani period as Nuzi Ware, but much more popular.

6 E.g. Hole 1997.

7 Wilkinson 1996, 14.

8 Meijer 1986.

9 Cf. Meijer 1986, 32f.

10 Wilkinson – Tucker 1995, 79.

11 Wilkinson – Tucker 1995, 98.

2 The presentation of sources

A considerable number of surveys have been conducted within the Jazireh; they are too numerous to present here a full analysis.¹² Because a significant number of them are not fully published yet, three areas located within the Mittani Kingdom will be chosen for analysis: the Khabur Triangle area, the Balikh Valley and the Lower Khabur Valley.

The Upper Khabur Survey was conducted by Bertille Lyonnet in the early 1990s.¹³ It covered the central part of the Khabur Triangle, but only around 60 sites of historic periods were surveyed, including mainly small and medium sized sites.¹⁴ On the one hand, it is not clear why some sites were chosen to be surveyed, while others were omitted.¹⁵ On the other, most of the visited sites were surveyed extensively, including in many cases small secondary sites located in the vicinity of the main, high mound. Another problem with the Khabur Survey is that the published summary of results does not differentiate between the Middle Assyrian and the Neo Assyrian period. This problem was only recently solved with the publication of the Middle and Neo Assyrian pottery collected during fieldwork.¹⁶ This also opens a new possibility to compare the settlement patterns from the Mittani period to Middle Assyrian times. Only a few of the surveyed sites were subsequently excavated (for instance, Tall Beydar and Tall Arbid). The results of the Upper Khabur Survey may be, to a certain extent, corroborated by smaller regional surveys. One of them has been undertaken in the vicinity of Tall Brak,¹⁷ the other around Tall Beidar.¹⁸

The Balikh Drainage Survey was conducted by Peter M.M.G. Akkermans in 1983 as part of the original research program at Tall Hammam at-Turkman. The results of this survey were presented in an unpublished PhD dissertation by Hans Curvers (1991). Tony Wilkinson's subsequent survey of this area provided a means for verifying the results of the earlier research, especially on Iron Age sites.¹⁹ Last but not least, J. D. Lyon evaluated this area as well.²⁰ It is important to note that a number of sites located in this area were excavated after they had been surveyed, thus providing an opportunity to cross-

12 For the summaries cf. Wilkinson 2000a; Wossink 2009, 91–99, fig. 5.1.

13 Lyonnet 2000.

14 X. Faivre attempted an analysis of settlement pattern in his unpublished PhD thesis (1999; n.v.).

15 B. Lyonnet, in her lecture presented during the same conference, explained that sites were chosen in a way providing uniform coverage of the whole area under the study (cf. Lyonnet, below).

16 Anastasio 2007.

17 Eidem – Warburton 1996.

18 Wilkinson 2000b; Ur 2004.

19 Wilkinson 1998.

20 Lyon 2000.

check the survey's accuracy.²¹ Wossink (2009) offered an additional assessment of the survey data.

The pottery from the Amsterdam University survey has been dated and evaluated according to pottery sequences from stratified deposits of the third and second millennium BC at Tall Hammam at-Turkman.²² The three periods under consideration here correspond to strata VIIA-C (MBA), VIIIA-B (Mittani) and VIIIC (Middle Assyrian) of this site. The survey seems to have had a very high chronological resolution (the MBA period is divided into three phases, and the Mittani period into two), but because periods were sometimes determined on the basis of a single sherd, these determinations may be exaggerated. In this situation, besides presenting sites according to the original chronological determinations, they will be synthesized on the period scale in order to obtain results comparable to other discussed areas.²³

The Lower Khabur Valley was surveyed intensively during the 1970s, first by a team of the TAVO project, headed by W. Röllig and H. Kühne (this survey covered the entire lower part of the valley, between Hasake and Khabur – Euphrates confluence).²⁴ Y. Monchambert also surveyed this area before the announcement of the Hasake South Dam Salvage Project.²⁵ Both surveys have never been fully published, but lists of sites and some details are available. Some period-orientated summaries of the TAVO survey have been attempted.²⁶ A considerable number of sites were subsequently excavated, mainly those located in the northern part of the area, as part of the salvage excavations program. Most of them, however, yielded evidence of the third millennium BC settlement only.

The data provided by these projects will be subsequently analyzed in regard to three features:

1. Settlement density and settlement pattern;
2. Changes in size and location of settled area within a site or site system;
3. Transfer of local centers within a regional network.

The first activity is a standard procedure in surveys. After plotting all the sites of the same period on the map, their relations are described by the number of settlements, their aggregate surface, a factor of changeability (ratio of settlements which continue to be occupied to the number of settlements which were abandoned and to the number of new settle-

21 Tall Mefesh (BS-138), Tall Sahlan (BS-247), Tall Aswad (BS-245), Tall Jidle (BS-276) and Tall (Hammam) Ibn esh-Shehab (BS-275) by Mallowan (1946), Tall Hammam at-Turkman (BS-175) by van Loon (1988), Tall Sabi Abyad (BS-189) by Akkermans (1993; 2006; Akkermans et al. 1993) and Khirbet esh-Shenef (BS-170) by Bartl (1990).

22 Curvers 1991, 75–173.

23 A similar approach was accepted in the later studies of this area (by Lyon and Wossink).

24 E.g. Kühne 1978/79; Kühne – Röllig 1980; 1983.

25 Monchambert 1984a; 1984b.

26 Morandi Bonacossi 1996; 2008; Kulemann-Ossen 2009.

ments, located in places which were previously unoccupied). More elaborate methods include rank-size graphs and introducing Theissen Polygon boundaries. These two methods aim at reconstructing the structure of settlements and possible reflections of political or economical stratification within the settlement pattern. It is possible to apply all these methods to the results of a survey with full coverage of sites, which is moreover carried out within geo-political units. Only the Lower Khabur Survey and, to a lesser extent, The Balikh Drainage Survey meet these conditions (the Turkish border, which set a limit to the surveyed area from the North, excluded sites located within the territory of Turkey from consideration, even though they originally belonged to the same economical and political network as those to the south of the border).

The study of the second feature repeats, to some extent, one of the procedures described in the previous paragraph. It can be performed only in respect of the Upper Khabur Survey, because it was the only survey for which the distribution of material on each site/site system were published. Consequently, it is possible to record changes (or lack of changes) in the size and location of the settled area within the site or a cluster of sites.

The third factor aims at recording eventual transfer of regional centers within the existing settlement network. Such a transfer could have various causes, for instance, administrative, political, or economical; it could be related to changes in the road network or to an increase or decrease of population numbers, etc.

3 Regional studies

3.1 Settlement density and patterns

3.1.1 *The Upper Khabur Survey*

The methodology of this particular survey makes it difficult to evaluate the general features of settlement patterns at any period, and comparisons between periods are hardly possible. The observations presented below have thus a preliminary character and are based on the assumption that the surveyed sample of sites is representative of the whole region throughout its history.

Before I turn to the analysis, I would like to mention again that in this project sites were surveyed according to their topography (sherds of different sectors of the site were collected separately) and that period determinations were made in a way reflecting the density of sherds on the surface of sites (a four tier scale has been used). It should be noted that most of the sites discussed below also yielded some evidence of the Middle or Neo Assyrian periods as well as later occupations. On the one hand, this could influence the visibility of sherds belonging to earlier periods and, on the other, it may influence the identification of second millennium BC cultural periods (see above).

While as many as 47 of 63 surveyed sites represented second millennium settlements, the Middle Bronze period was represented on only 33 of them (Fig. 1).²⁷ Of this number, more than 50% (17 sites) yielded low density of sherds, which was interpreted as evidence of a doubtful settlement or a settlement of limited intensity, while as much as seven were classified as very intensively settled. Of these seven sites only one (Tall Arbid) accounts for a larger settlement (site area of about 7 ha), one more is probably a large village (ca. 3.5 ha in area) while the others cover an area of less than 1 ha each.

This situation hardly reflects the actual settlement pattern of the period. As many as 19 sites were identified in the Tall Brak Regional Survey;²⁸ a number of them were very suggestive of real settlement density for the period. Moreover, the evidence of excavated sites demonstrates that a number of large and certainly more important settlements existed within the region (Tell Chagar Bazar), or were located on the border of the surveyed area (Tall Barri, Tall Brak, Tall Ailun or Tall Mozan). No doubt they constituted part of the Khabur Triangle area's settlement system. However, the fieldwork of Wilkinson²⁹ and Ur³⁰ in the area of Tall Beydar demonstrates that the southwestern part of the Khabur Triangle was very sparsely settled, confirming observations by Lyonnet, who found there exclusively minor or seasonal settlements.

For the Mittani period 40 sites are in evidence,³¹ most of which were settled intensively or very intensively (24 and 6 sites respectively) (Fig. 2). Among these sites three groups of tells distinguished by size are clearly observable. The first group is composed of seven tells of approximately 7 to 5 hectares. The second, consisting of seven tells as well, extended over an area of 2–3 hectares. The remaining 16 sites represent tells smaller than 1 hectare. Excavations at Tall Beydar have revealed that the site had an extensive lower city that was omitted by the survey, but it is difficult to determine its extent. As in the preceding period, there is some evidence for the existence of larger sites located on the border of the survey area. Besides the already mentioned settlements at Tall Brak, Tall Barri and Tall Mozan, some new, large sites appear, namely, Tall Fakhariya, Tall Hasake, Tall Hamidiya, and the still unexcavated Tall Beizari.

A comparison of the distribution of the MBA and the Mittanian sites shows a considerable degree of continuity. Of seven sites with very intensive MBA occupation, one is also very intensively settled during Mittani times, four are intensively occupied, and only two seem to be entirely abandoned after the end of the MBA. If we consider both very intensively occu-

27 Y. Nishiaki surveyed 44 sites located in the same area, of which 14 yielded MBA pottery and 11 Middle and Neo Assyrian pottery (Lyonnet 2000, 39, tab. 5). The Mittani period has not been distinguished in the summary of Nishiaki's survey, and no specific information on the sites was provided. For this reason they were excluded from further analysis.

28 Eidem – Warburton 1996, 57.

29 Wilkinson 2000b, 15.35.

30 Ur 2004, 178f., fig. 4.27.

31 Both the Tall Brak survey and the Tall Beydar survey summed up sites evidencing the Mittani and the Middle Assyrian pottery, and therefore they are not included in the present analysis.

pied and intensively occupied sites, the picture is similar: of 16 MBA sites, two were very intensively used during the Mittani times, 10 were intensively used and only four were abandoned. Despite this high degree of settlement continuity it is very likely that changes occurred at the same time in the role and importance of most of the sites. Taking into account the fact that MBA settlements tend to be small, we have to assume that this reflects a development of these small sites (less than 1 ha in area) into larger villages or small townships. Four out of six sites, which were qualified as very intensively used during the Mittani period, were either not settled at all during the MBA period or show only traces of settlement. Consequently, they have to be considered as new locations of Mittani period settlement.

The results of the Khabur Survey, if they can be trusted, point to an increase in settlement density during the Mittani period. The overall number of sites increased by only 30 % in comparison to the first half of the second millennium, but there is a very clear increase in the number of intensively or very intensively settled sites (it doubled during Mittani times), and there is also a very significant increase in the number of larger (“6-hectare” and “3-hectare”) sites: seven sites of each group existed during the Mittani period, in contrast to one site for each group during the Middle Bronze Age.

During the Middle Assyrian period, as far as it is reflected by the Khabur Survey, the situation changed again. The number of sites identified in the survey is higher than during the Mittani period. However, of the 48 sites, only one (Ain al-Qard, no. 38, an area of 2.3 ha) is listed as an intensively settled³². Three sites witnessed intensive occupation (Tell Ahmar, no. 45, an area of 4.9 ha; Tall Kdich, no. 32, an area of 0.8 ha; and Tall Hassek, no. 28, an area of 1.5 ha), and nine sites showed traces of less intensive occupation (Fig. 3). The remaining sites (34 in number) were included in the list based on the presence of ten or fewer Middle Assyrian sherds.³³

The overall number of sites occupied during the Middle Assyrian Period is higher than during the preceding period, but on most sites only a few Middle Assyrian sherds were identified. There is considerable continuity – the six very intensively used Mittani sites are all occupied during the Middle Assyrian period as well: one very intensively, two intensively and the remaining three less intensively. Among the Middle Assyrian sites (leaving aside those with seasonal occupation) only two (sites no. 26 and 33) are new locations. Nonetheless, the number of intensively used Middle Assyrian sites is much lower than during the Mittani period (only four in comparison to 30 intensively or very intensively used Mittani sites) and the entire settlement pattern seems to be much more dispersed and less dense than before.

The distribution of the sites is similar to that of the MBA period: larger and more intensively used sites are located mainly in the northern part of the surveyed area. Small sites seem to be evenly distributed, though they are fewer in number in the eastern part of the area. This may also be the result of how the surveyed sites were selected in this area.³⁴

³² Anastasio 2007, 140, Abb. 136a.

³³ Anastasio 2007, 140f.; Anhang B & C.

³⁴ Cf. Lyonnet 2000, fig. 1.

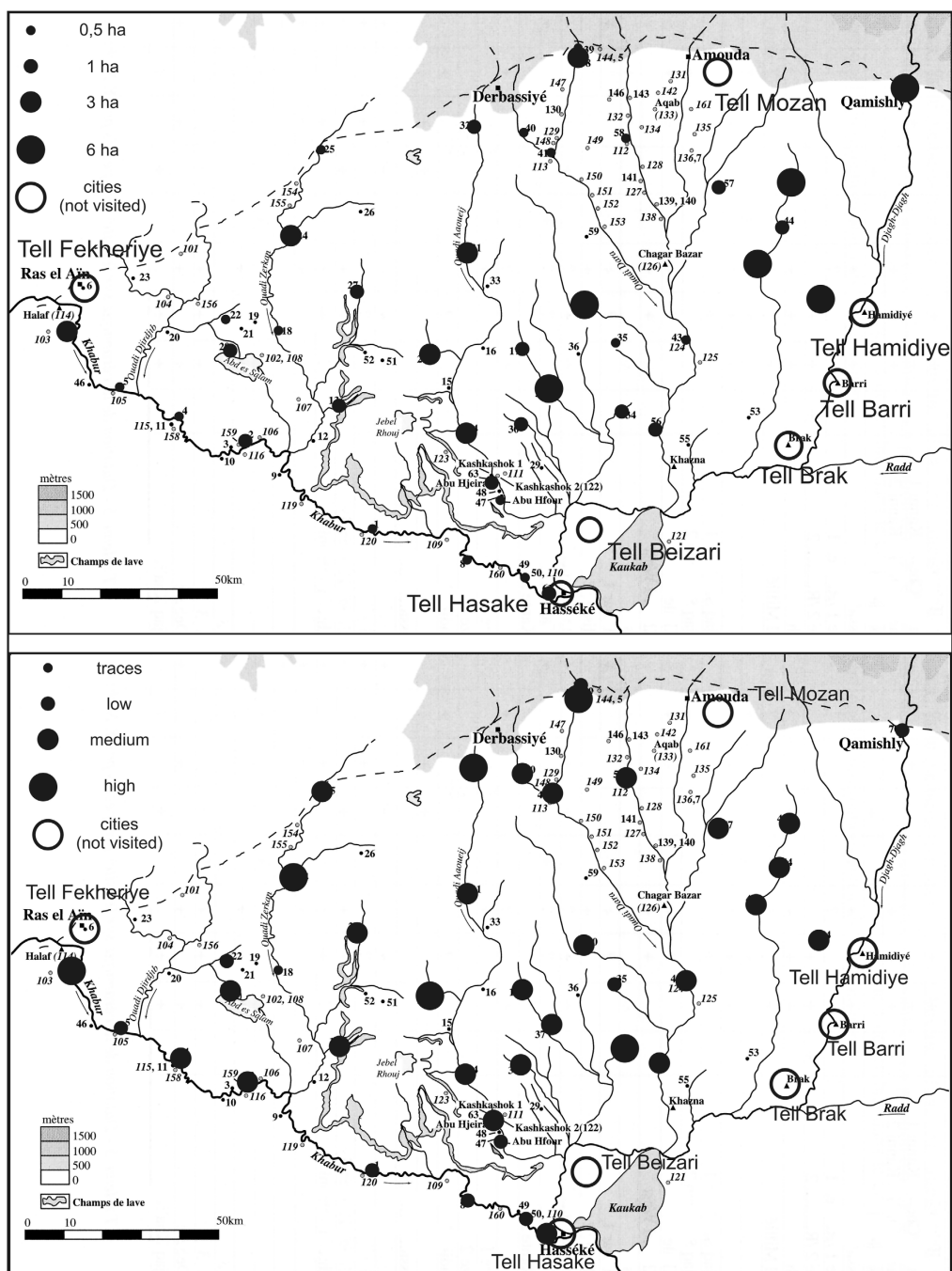
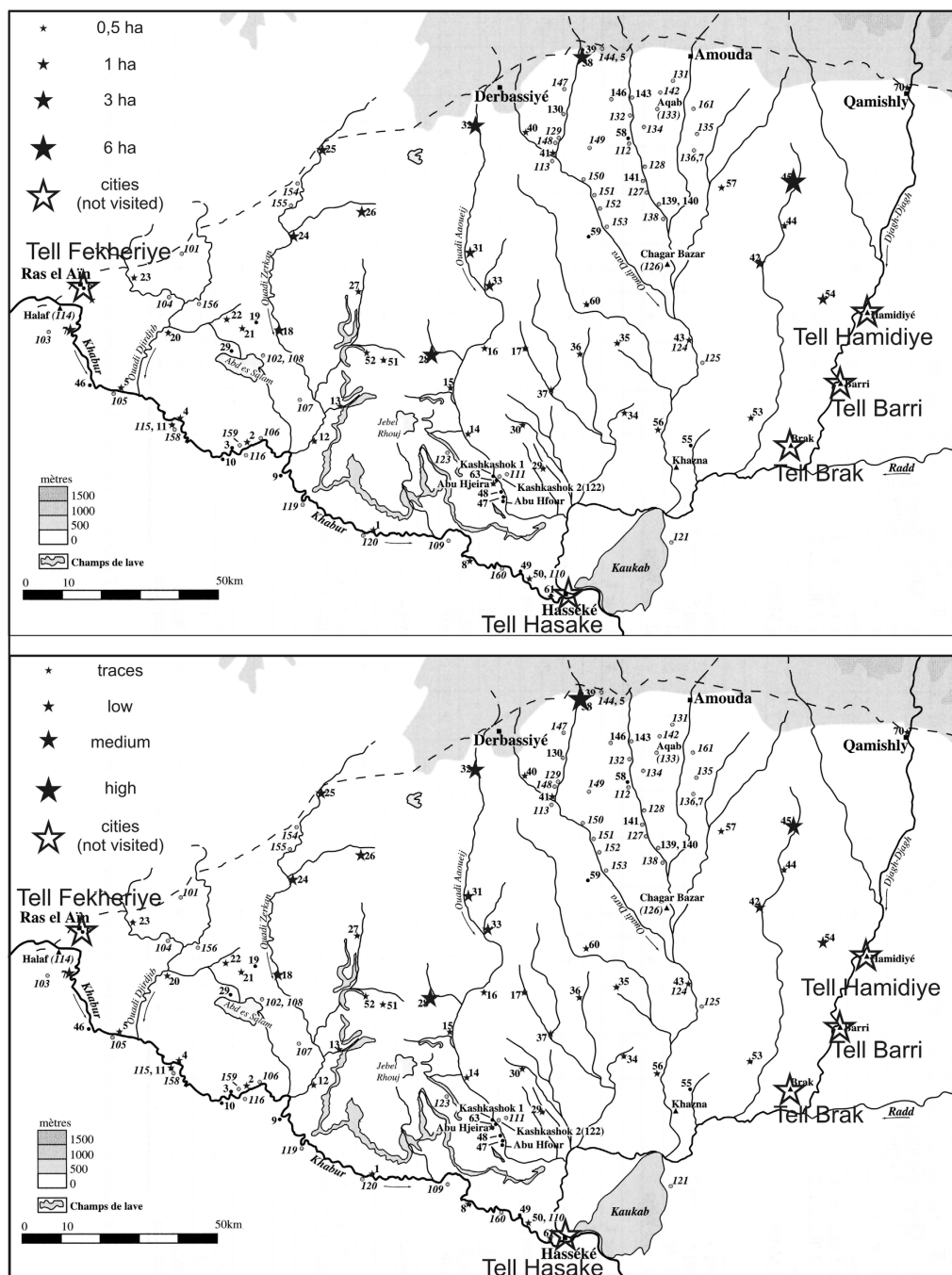


Fig. 2 | Sites from the Mittani period identified in the Upper Khabor Survey. Top: according to area; Bottom: according to intensity of use. Drawing based on Lyonnet 2000, fig. 1.



3.1.2 *The Balikh Valley*

The first feature, which can be observed easily, is a clear-cut division of the surveyed area into a northern and a southern part. The southern part consists of the river valley itself. As it is located outside the rain-fed agriculture zone, settlements are located along the river, where agricultural land as a subsistence base for the villages is very limited. The northern part is located within the 250 mm isohyet and includes not only the river valley but the valleys of some seasonal streams as well (of which Wadi Qaramokh and Wadi Humar were not surveyed by Curvers).³⁵ Agricultural land is much more readily available there, and the core of this area is constituted by the Hammam at-Turkman plain; thus, it could be expected that the northern part of Balikh drainage would be much more intensively occupied, as was confirmed by the survey.

As the fieldwork carried out by Akkermans and Curvers³⁶ and that of Lyon³⁷ differ considerably in their conclusions, they will be presented separately here, and only at the end of this section will an attempt be made to integrate them.

According to Curvers,³⁸ the MBA settlement in the southern part of the valley comprises 26 sites (Fig. 4a). It mainly consists of small settlements (eight sites of an area of about 1 hectare and 16 sites of an area around 0.5 hectare or less). Only two larger settlements (each approx. 10 ha in area) were identified in this section of the valley, forming a cluster of sites located close to each other on the opposite banks of the Balikh: Tall Seman (BS-83) on the western bank and BS-84 on the eastern one. A widening of the river valley provided a larger area suitable for agriculture and was a major reason for the development of both sites. The southernmost 15 km of the valley have no settlements. This feature may be explained by the narrowness of the valley, the presence of soils with high gypsum content (i.e. of low fertility), and the proximity of a large site, Tall Bi'a (Tuttul), near the Balikh-Euphrates confluence.

In the northern part of the drainage 45 sites were identified (Fig. 4b). Similarly to the south, this area is dominated by very small sites (27 sites of an area of 0.5 ha or less) but larger sites (2 ha or more) are much more abundant (10 sites). Three urban centers were identified, all with an area of about 6 hectares: Tall Hammam at-Turkman (BS-175) located on the confluence of the Balikh and Wadi Sluk, Tall Sahlan (BS-247), located ca. 10 km upstream the Balikh, near to its confluence with Wadi Jellab, and Tall Abyad (BS 280) located opposite Tall Sahlan. The average site area both in the south and in the north is similar: around 1.5 ha.

35 Some sites located in the Balikh Valley and in Wadi Qaramokh were surveyed by a Spanish team and published in an interim report, which does not give the dimensions of sites (Córdoba 1988). The Wadi Hamar area was partly covered by a survey conducted by Alexander Pruss, which focused on an area with a radius of 10 km centered on the site of Kharab Seyyar (Pruss 1990).

36 Curvers 1991.

37 Lyon 2000.

38 Curvers 1991, 201–207.

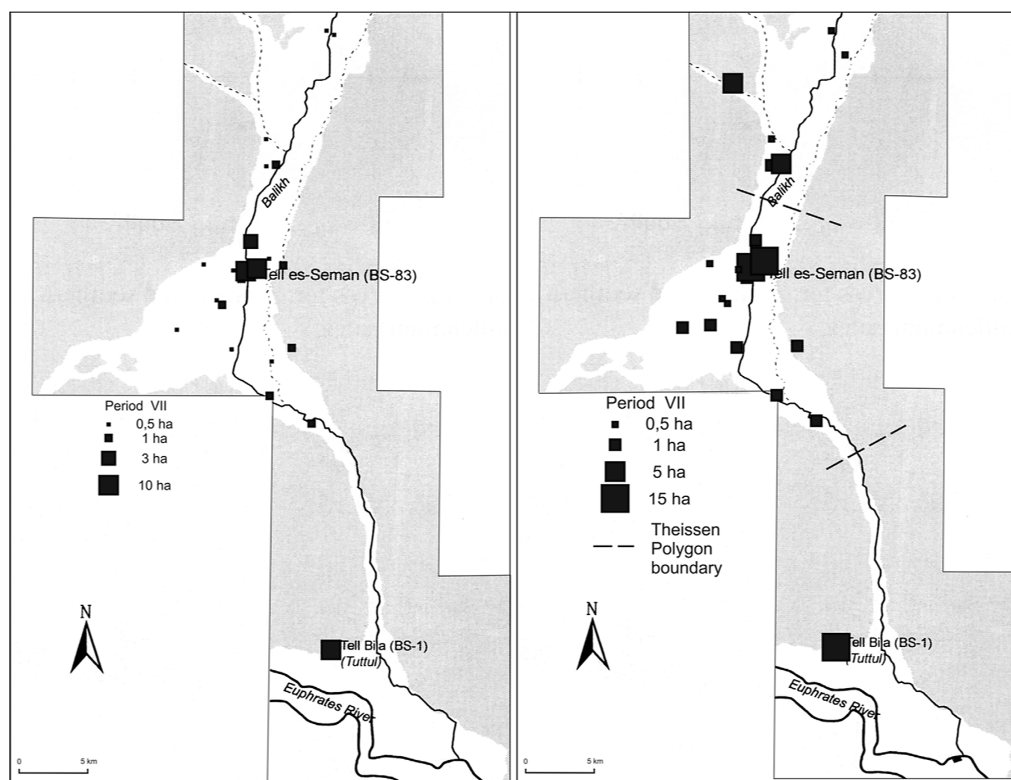


Fig. 4a | Sites from the Middle Bronze Age (Hammam at-Turkman period VII) in the Southern part of the Balikh Valley. Left: according to Curvers; right: according to Lyon. Drawing based on Lyon 2000, fig. 2.

According to Curvers, the settlement dynamics point to the intensification of land use during the Hammam et-Turkam VIIB period. He assigns most of the identified sites to this period (63 sites registered, 24 of which are located in the southern and 39 in the northern part of the area). Period VIIA featured only about half of the number of sites (34 sites registered, 13 in the south and 21 in the north) but the sites are generally of larger dimensions (average area close to 2 ha). During the VIIC period the number of sites decreases in comparison to period VIIB (46 sites registered, 17 in the south, 29 in the north). In the south a trend towards reduction of the site area is observable (average of ca. 1 ha), which, in my opinion, stems from the fact that period identifications are often based on the retrieval of a single characteristic sherd.

It has to be noted that there is a significant inconsistency between the already quoted data, and those published by Lyon.³⁹ In his study Lyon lists only 50 sites⁴⁰ with occupation

³⁹ Lyon 2000, 97f., tab. 2.

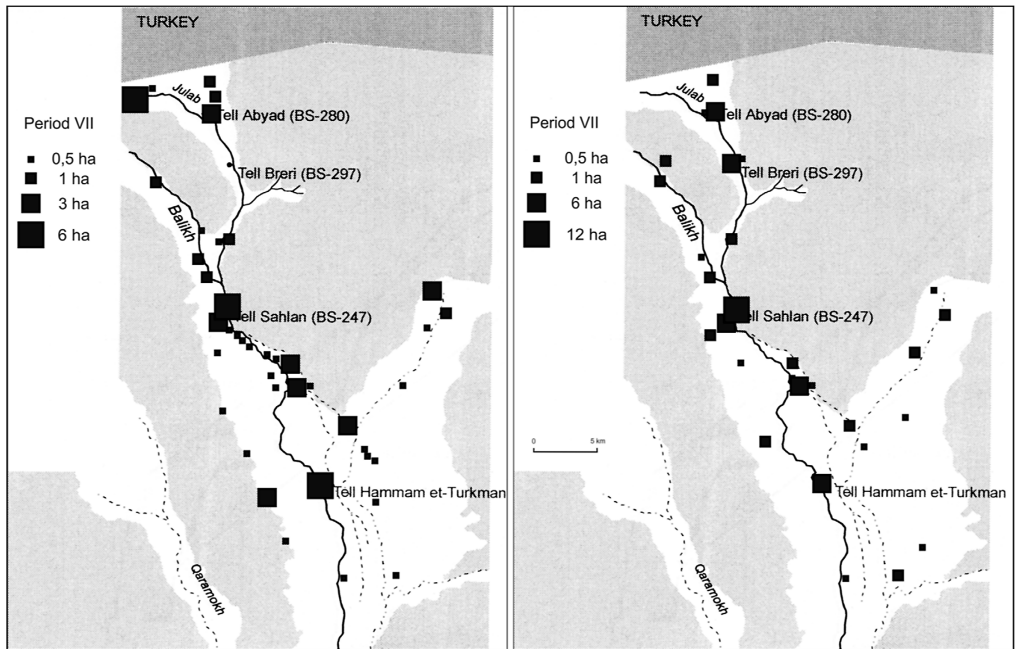


Fig. 4b | Sites from the Middle Bronze Age (Hammam at-Turkman period VII) in the Northern part of the Balikh Valley. Left: according to Curvers; right: according to Lyon. Drawing based on Lyon 2000, fig. 2.

during the MBA period, but as the focus of his study was on the latter part of the second millennium BC he neither attempted a more thorough analysis of the settlement patterns of the MBA period, nor observed the division of the MBA into three periods. Another significant difference between Lyon's study and that of Curvers is that the first gives much higher figures of the estimated site area than the second. Consequently, Lyon's average site area is nearly twice as large as Curvers' (2.78 ha against 1.5). Apart from Tall Bi'a (BS-1, 25 ha), he identifies one large site in each part of the Balikh Valley: Tall Sahlan (BS-247, 16 ha) in the North, and Tall Saman (BS-83, 17 ha) in the south. Sites of medium area (6–4 ha) are not evenly distributed: there are four of them in the north (Tall Abyad, Tall Breri, Tall Jittal, Tall Hammam at-Turkman) but only two in the south (Tall Khadriya and Tall Sabaniyeh; the latter was not identified by Curvers at all). These last two sites are located on the Wadi Isa, in a zone on the border between the northern and the southern part of the Balikh Valley. The six medium sized and two larger sized sites account for eight territorial/administrative

40 Wossink convincingly demonstrated that at least five sites need to be removed from the original list of Curvers: BS-221 and BS-243 were mistakenly interpreted as sites (they were not listed by Lyon), and BS-170, 189 and 191 which did not yield MBA pottery during excavations (Wossink 2009, 81).

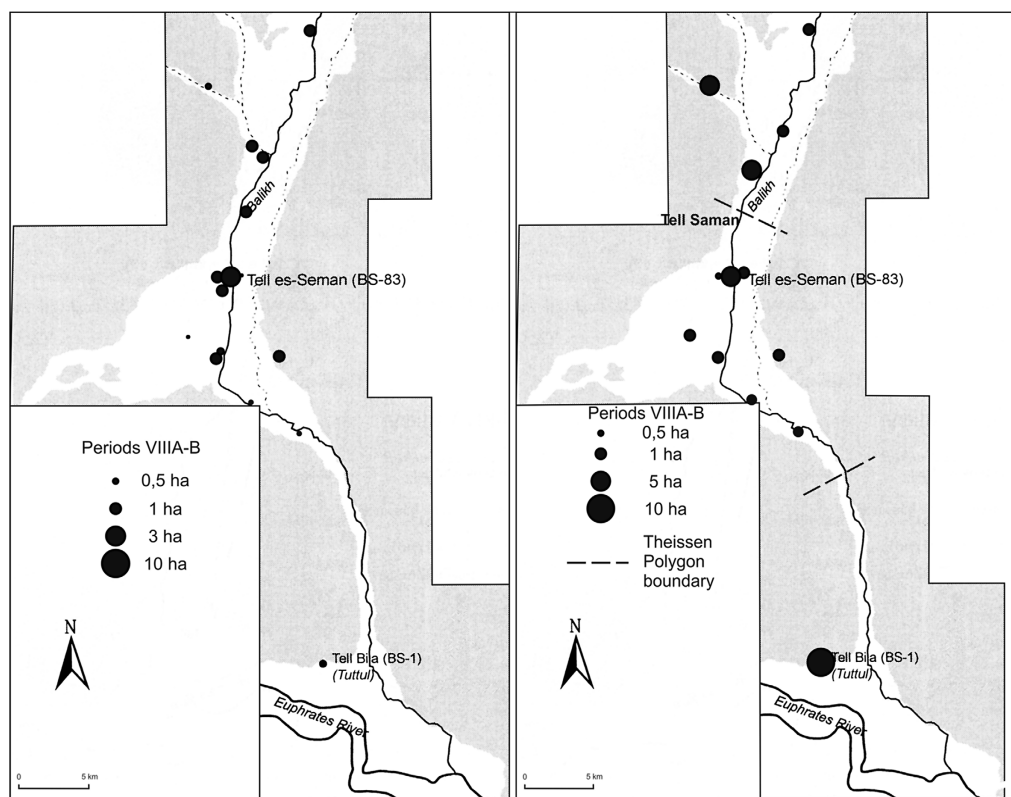


Fig. 5a | Sites from the Mittani period (Hamman at-Turkman period VIIIA-B) in the southern part of the Balikh Valley. Left: according to Curvers; right: according to Lyon. Drawing based on Lyon 2000, fig. 4.

units in a reconstruction based on application of the Thiessen polygon method:⁴¹ two in the south and the remaining six in the north. Each of these units “controlled” a zone in which four to ten small settlements were located. According to the rank-size evaluation, the entire area of the Balikh Valley shows a high degree of integration, but when split into two sections, this picture changes. Two centers located in the southern part of the valley (plus Tall Bi’a) seem to form relatively independent sub-systems, with Tall Bi’a controlling mainly the Euphrates valley area.⁴² Six units present in the north probably belong to two larger entities, whose centers were most likely located more to the north, beyond the Turkish border (likely candidates are Harran and Sultantepe).⁴³

⁴¹ Lyon 2000, fig. 15.

⁴² Some texts, mainly from Mari, demonstrate however, that its control over the southern part of the Balikh Valley was considerable (Krebern timer 2001, 12).

⁴³ Lyon 2000, 97f.

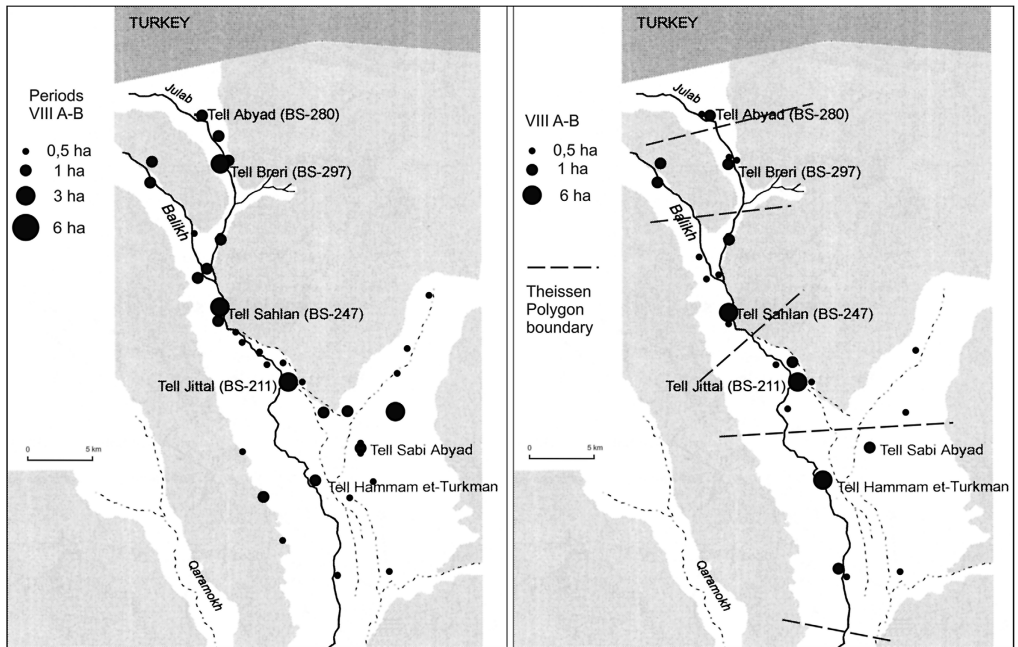


Fig. 5b | Sites from the Mittani period (Hamman at-Turkman period VIIIA-B) in the Northern part of the Balikh Valley. Left: according to Curvers; right: according to Lyon. Drawing based on Lyon 2000, fig. 4.

The Mittani period is less well represented in the area of the Balikh Survey than the preceding period.

According to Curvers,⁴⁴ only 17 sites from this period are present in the southern part of the valley, most of which fall into the category of very small sites (0.5 ha or less) (Fig. 5a). Only one site is of moderate size – Tall Seman (BS-83). Its estimated surface area was 3 ha and despite a reduction in size it clearly continues to serve as a local center. Its “twin site”, BS-84, shows traces of occupation during the VIIIA period but was probably abandoned later. Sites tend to be much smaller than in the preceding period; on average they are less than 1 ha and decrease in size during the VIIIB period.

Mittani period sites are much more abundant in the northern part of the area (Fig. 5b). Among 36 identified sites 50 % are very small, but sites of an area of ca. 1 ha are nearly equally numerous (15 such sites were identified). Only three local centers can be identified, but they are considerably smaller than the MBA centers of the area, covering an area of 3–4 hectares each. It should be noted that the settled area on several high mounds was calculated in a very particular way, reflecting the situation encountered at Tall Hamman at-Turkman, where only one large mansion seems to exist on the top of the tell. For instance, on

44 Curvers 1991, 207f.

Tall Sahlan, where period VIIB and period VIII pottery was collected in the same areas (on the top and all the slopes of the tell), the area calculated for period VII is 7.5 ha, and for period VIII it is estimated at only 3 hectares. A similar situation is encountered at Tall Abyad, where period VII occupation covered 4.8 ha and, despite the fact that period VIII sherds are encountered on all the slopes, the area of settlement is estimated at only 1.5 ha.⁴⁵ Tall Sahlan (BS 247) and Tall Jittal (BS-211) are located on the eastern bank of the Balikh; this second site probably took over the role of a local center from Hammam at-Turkman. A third local center, Tall Breri (BS-297), is located on the western bank of Wadi Jellab, nearby Tall Abyad, another likely candidate for such a role. It seems that the major center of the area was located outside of the surveyed section of the valley; a likely candidate is Harran, which, according to cuneiform texts, was referred to as a *halsu*, or “district”, indicating it was an administrative center.⁴⁶ Sites located in the northern part of the valley are on average bigger than those in the south (the mean value of site area is slightly above 1 hectare).

An important feature observed by Curvers is a significant decrease in the settlement density during the VIIIB period, visible mainly in the northern part of the surveyed area. The number of sites drops from 36 to 22 and their aggregate area from 36 to 27 hectares. But again, this conclusion may be biased by a limited ability to recognize sherds typical of sub-periods of Mittanian occupation at Tall Hammam at-Turkman.

Just like in the previously discussed MBA period, Lyon’s site area estimates are considerably higher than those of Curvers. The aggregate area of settlements represented by 41 sites is 94.4 ha, i.e. three times as much as in the previously discussed analysis. According to Lyon⁴⁷, despite a slight decrease in the number of sites and in the aggregate sites area, the settlement pattern of the Mittani period follows that of the MBA. The largest site is still Tall Bi’a, located in the Euphrates valley, while seven smaller sites (of an area from 8 to 4 hectares) that serve as local centers, are dispersed predominantly in the northern part of the valley, exactly on the same sites as in the previous period. Harran, located to the north, behind the present-day border with Turkey, served as another higher-ranking center for the northern part of the valley. As in the preceding period, two clusters of sites are found in the south (one centered on Tall es-Seman, the other on a pair of sites, BS-117 and BS-139). The most extensive of the three northern clusters is Tall Hammam at-Turkman, which included Tall Jittal as well. The second cluster is centered at Tall Sahlan, while the third included two sites of similar area: Tall Breri and Tall Abyad.

The Middle Assyrian period (Hammam at-Turkman period VIIIC) is represented by an even smaller number of sites. The thesis by Curvers lists only eight tells from this period present in the southern part of the valley and as many as 20 in its northern section (Figs.

45 Estimates of Lyon are as follows: Tall Hammam at-Turkman – 3,9 ha, Tall Sahlan – 8,3 ha, Tall Abyad – 4,9 ha (Lyon 2000, Tab. 2).

46 Postgate 1973.

47 Lyon 2002, 99–100

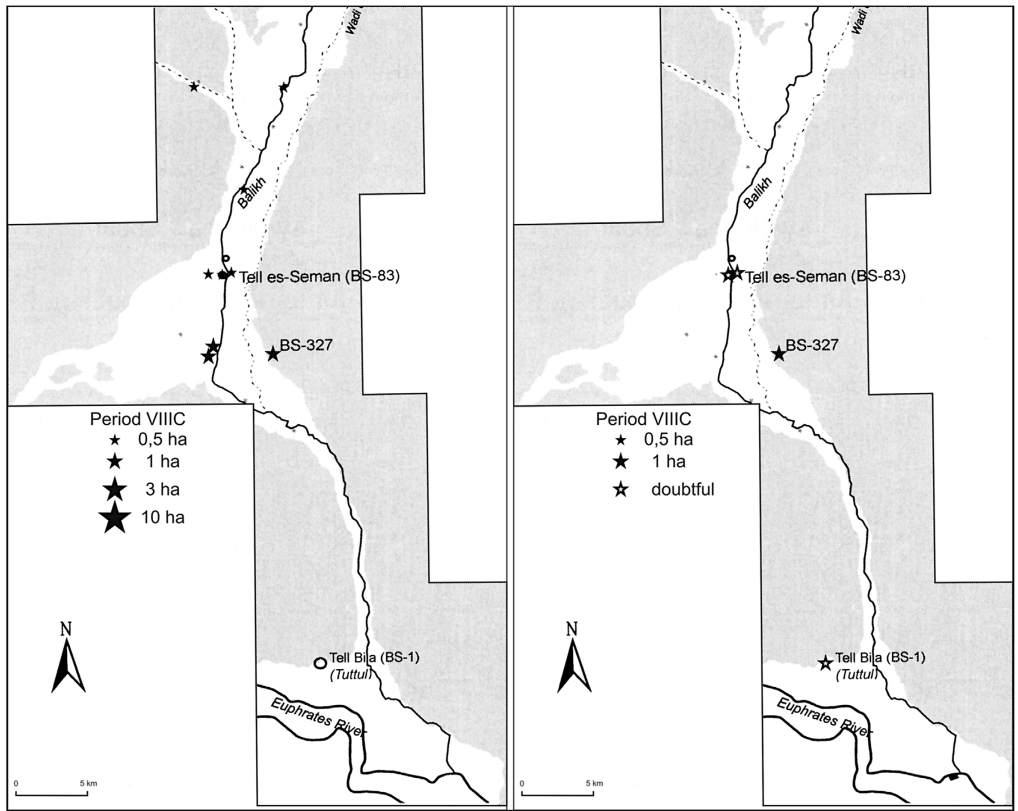


Fig. 6a | Sites from the Middle Assyrian Period (Hamam at-Turkman period VIIIC) in the southern part of the Balikh Valley. Left: according to Curvers, right: according to Lyon. Drawing based on Lyon 2000, fig. 7.

6a–b). These numbers differ only slightly from the number of sites from which period VIIIB pottery has been identified (11 and 22 sites, respectively).

In the southern part of the Balikh drainage, only small sites were identified (three of them have an area of about 1 ha, others are 0.5 hectare or smaller), located on both sides of the river. BS-327, belonging to a group of sites of 1 ha in area, has a somewhat special position: it is located on the edge of a high river terrace, in a position providing a good view of the entire section of the river valley. Curvers assumed that a Middle Assyrian military post was located there.

In the northern part of the area the Middle Assyrian evidence is similar to that of the Mittani period. All three local centers (Tell Sahlan, Tall Breri and Tall Jittal) continue to exist with no change in respect to their settled area. The number of very small sites is the highest (11), but sites of an area of around 1 hectare are relatively numerous (six sites, all occupied during the previous period). Generally speaking, the Middle Assyrian period shows a con-

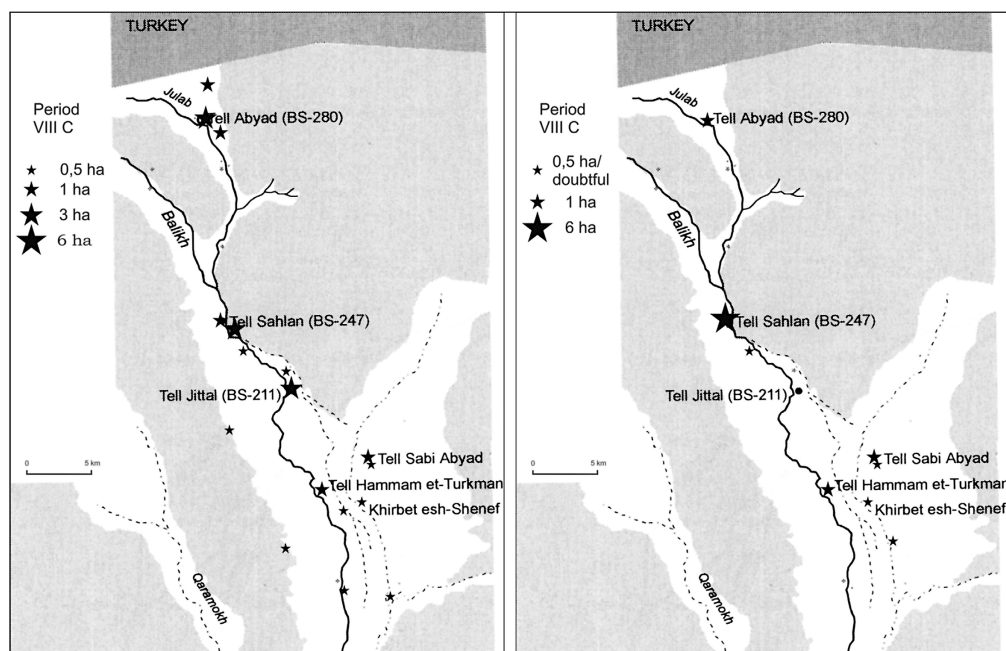


Fig. 6b | Sites from the Middle Assyrian Period (Hammam at-Turkman period VIIIC) in the northern part of the Balikh Valley. Left: according to Curvers, right: according to Lyon. Drawing based on Lyon 2000, fig. 7.

tinuation of the earlier settlement pattern; however, a decline in settlement is evidenced in the southern part of the Balikh Valley.

Again, Lyon's evaluation of the situation differs considerably from that of Curvers. A misunderstanding may initially have been caused by Curvers's identification of the Middle Assyrian period as VIIIC, in contrast to Lyon's identification of the same period as VIIIB. The number of sites listed by Lyon is remarkably low: he lists only six sites with confirmed occupation for this period for the whole survey area (Tall Sahlan, Tall Jittal, Tall Sabi Abyad I, Tall Hammam at-Turkman, Khirbet esh-Shenef in the north and Tall Abbara (BS-327) in the south). Six more sites yielded limited evidence (one or two Middle Assyrian sherds) and three more (including Tall Abyad and Tall Bi'a) are marked by question marks only. The biggest site, Tall Sahlan, has over 8 ha of area covered with occupation, three sites (including Tall Sabi Abyad I) are about 2 ha and others are smaller still. Nearly all the sites are located north of Tall Hammam at-Turkman and, according to Lyon, reflect an attempt to intensify agricultural exploitation of the rain-fed part of the Balikh valley. He interprets site BS-327 not as a sentry post (as Curvers did) but rather as a station on a road leading down the Balikh to the Euphrates Valley.

The reconstruction of settlement pattern trends in the Balikh Valley presented by Curvers needs to be modified significantly in light of Lyon's work. Curvers claimed to see a

trend toward a decrease in the number and size of settlements throughout the second millennium BC. Yet he observed a high degree of continuity, at least between the Middle Bronze Age settlement pattern and that of the Mittani period (well articulated when sites featuring period VIIB-C and VIIIA occupations are compared). All Mittani settlements identified in the southern part of the Balikh drainage were already occupied in the preceding period, and in the north only two sites, BS-199 and BS-296, are new settlements. Abandonment of earlier sites can be observed mainly in the south, where 11 of 25 MBA sites are abandoned, while in the north only six out of 39 sites show a break in occupation. This tendency continues during the Middle Assyrian period. Again, the southern part of the area demonstrates a high abandonment factor: of 16 Mittani sites only seven have Middle Assyrian occupation, and one site (BS-123) was newly founded. In the north the situation is slightly different. While 35 % of sites were abandoned (14 out of 36) there are no newly founded sites. These changes, together with the decrease in the settled area, point towards a settlement crisis affecting the Balikh area towards the end of the Late Bronze Age, a crisis which affected mainly the southern part of the area.

According to Lyon, the Mittani period exhibits a significant degree of continuity in the settlement pattern. A decrease in the number and the area of sites does not seem to affect the settlement pattern in the valley; eight clusters of sites from the Middle Bronze Age continue to exist and are centered around exactly the same larger sites. The continuity factor is about 70 %, while only very few sites are newly founded settlements. A drastic change in the settlement pattern appears at the beginning of the Middle Assyrian period. Around 80 % of earlier sites were abandoned, and new locations are even less numerous than before.⁴⁸ Almost all the larger sites continued into the Middle Assyrian period, as if the Assyrians were taking over local centers in order to control the country. Yet, a systematic surface collection at Tall Jital (BS-211)⁴⁹ allowed Lyon to observe that the Middle Assyrian occupation was of limited extent and was located only in the highest part of the site. A similar location was chosen for the Middle Assyrian settlement at Tall Sabi Abyad and Tall Chuera. According to Lyon this suggests that Assyrians constructed new, smaller, and probably protected settlements on most of the older sites, forming a close cluster of such sites; in the case of the Tall Sabi Abyad area, the sites are less than 4 km apart. Moreover, some excavated sites (Tall Sabi Abyad, Tall Jidle, Tall (Hammam) Ibn esh-Shehab, and Tall Hammam at-Turkman) exhibited conflagration and abandonment levels preceding the establishment of the Middle Assyrian settlements, suggesting that there was no direct continuity between the settlements of these periods.

Another tendency that can be observed during the whole latter part of the second millennium in the southern part of the Balikh drainage is the progressive abandonment⁵⁰ or

⁴⁸ Lyon 2000, 102f., figs. 9–11.

⁴⁹ Lyon 2000, 103, fig. 16.

⁵⁰ It has to be noted, that the population of the Balikh Valley reached its maximum, estimated at 14 000 – 24 000 persons, during the VIIB (mid-MBA) period (Wossink 2009, 87f.).

shrinkage of sites. During the Middle Assyrian period there were only one confirmed and two doubtful settlements. This trend is generally interpreted as a reflection of environmental change that created more arid conditions.

3.1.3 *The Lower Khabur Valley*

The settlement pattern in the Lower Khabur Valley is clearly influenced by environmental factors. In the southern part of the valley, archaeological sites are much more widely dispersed. For instance, the mean density of sites for the Neo Assyrian period is 0.098 of site per square kilometer in the area located south of the contemporary city of Saba'a wa-Arbain. By contrast, the settlement density in the north is 0.51 of site per square km.⁵¹ Consequently, the distance between cities in the northern part of the valley (for the Middle Assyrian period) averages 13.6 km (in a range from 11.5 to 16 km), while south of Tall Agaga it increases to 32.5 km on average (in a range 29.5 to 35.5 km). The same observation is valid for other periods, for instance the Early Bronze Age.⁵² It is also noticeable that there are segments of the valley where no settlements are attested – they correspond to the parts where the river valley is very narrow and where as a result there was very little or no flood plain (land suitable for agriculture).⁵³

The second millennium settlements are located mainly on the flood plain of the river (82 % and 78 % of settlements, respectively, for the earlier and the latter part of the millennium). Later, in the Neo Assyrian period, this proportion drops to 54 %; this is probably a result of the construction of irrigation canals during the early first millennium.⁵⁴

While the Middle Bronze period settlements in the Khabur Valley are relatively numerous (18 sites out of 33 sites settled during the second millennium), five of these sites yielded a very limited number of identifiable sherds, pointing to an incidental settlement (Fig. 7). A significant feature is that the presence of the MBA period is confirmed on all large sites, and on four of them (Tall Šeh Hamad, Tall Ašamsani, Tall Fadgami and Tall Taban) the settlement continues throughout the second millennium BC. The number of sites located on the western bank of the river is only slightly lower than on the eastern bank.

During the Mittani period a considerable difference in the ratio of towns to villages can be observed: 24 settlements from the Mittani period, ca. 75 % of the total settlement number, are small, countryside settlements. But it is the Middle Assyrian period which brings a significant change in the settlement pattern (Fig. 8). Out of the nine Middle Assy-

51 Morandi Bonacossi 2008, 189.

52 Ergenzinger – Kühne 1991, 182, fig. 139.

53 Morandi Bonacossi 2008, 190.

54 Morandi Bonacossi 2008, 190. This change is observable mainly in the southern part of the valley, where most of the settlements are located on the terrace above the valley – which was impossible during the earlier period. By comparison, in the north there are only three settlements from this period located on the terrace.

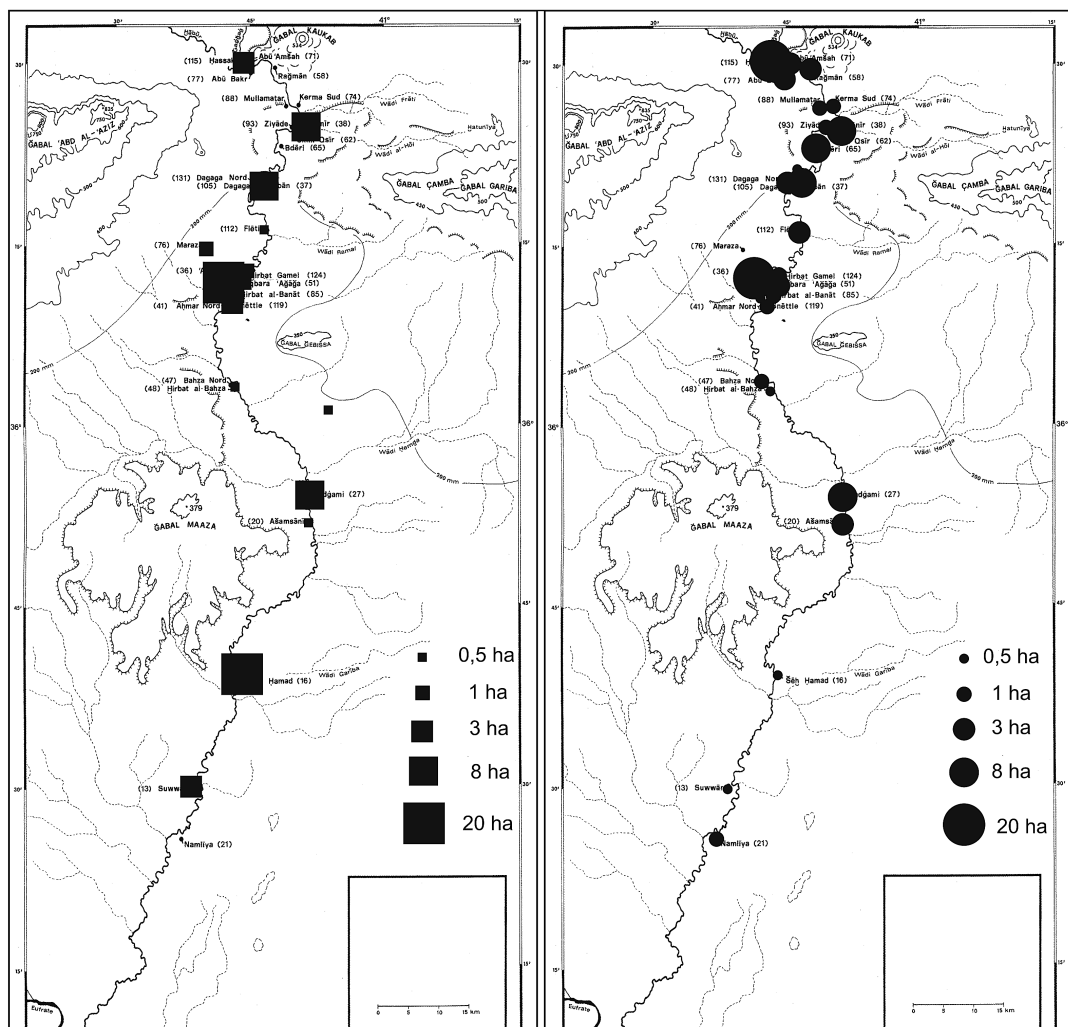


Fig. 7 | Sites identified in the Khabur Valley according to the results of the TAVO survey.
Left: Middle Bronze period; right: Mittani period. Drawing based on Morandi Bonacossi 2008, fig. 9.1.

rian settlements, six are cities, and only three are villages. Consequently, a smaller number of sites accounts for the same settled area within settlements (72 to 74 hectares of settled area) and thus the ratio of village to town populations is 1 : 9. By comparison, in the Neo Assyrian period the ratio is 12 : 1. Nearly the entire Middle Assyrian population in the Khabur Valley lived in towns, which were probably walled for protection.

Settlements in the steppe appear in the EBA and then resurface in the Neo Assyrian period. During the second millennium they are the exception rather than the rule. Two Middle Bronze sites located away from the river were discovered: Tall Gayyir, located 30 km

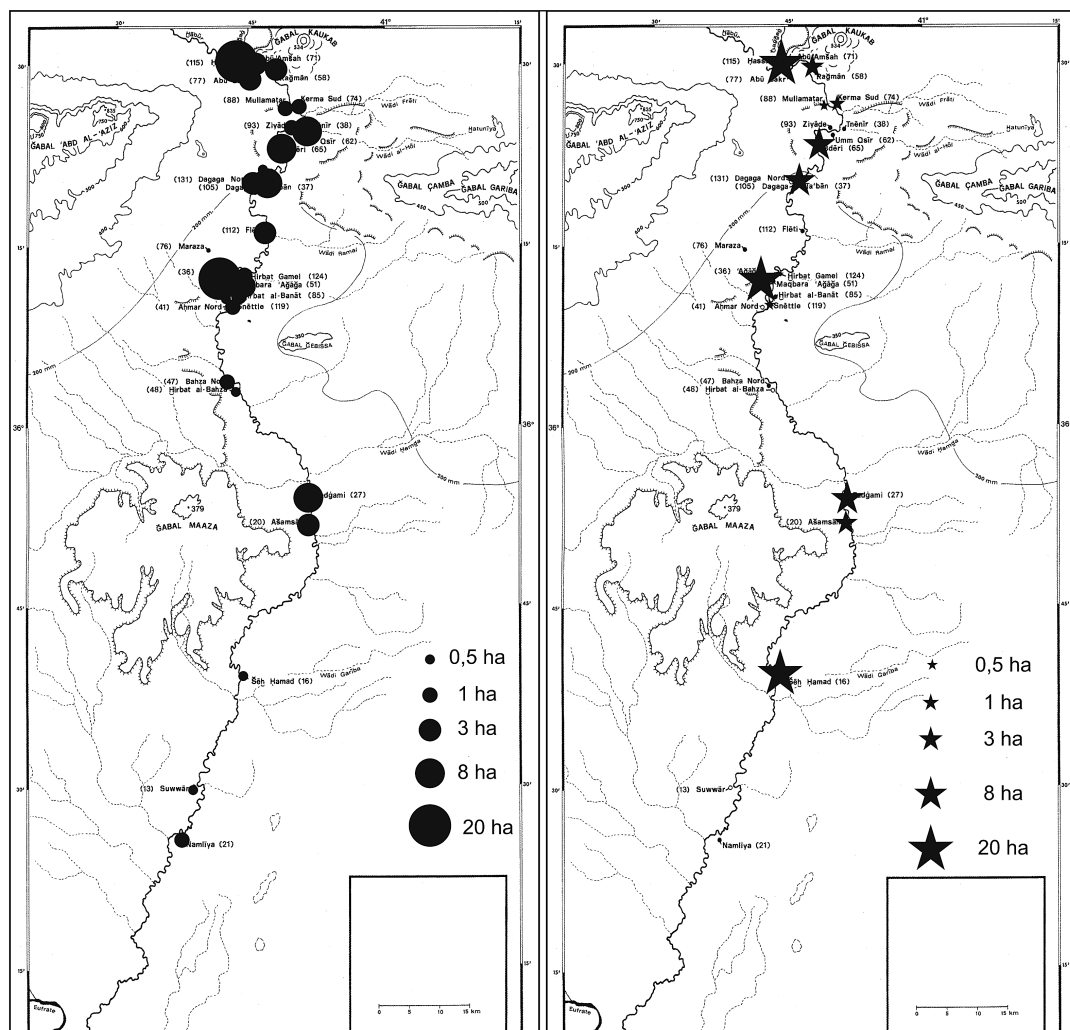


Fig. 8 | Sites identified in the Khabur Valley according to the results of the TAVO survey. Left: Mittani period; right: Middle Assyrian period. Drawing based on Morandi Bonaccosi 2008, fig. 9.1.

to the east, and Tall Manah, with traces of occupation only, about 20 km to the east. It is also necessary to mention a Middle Assyrian attempt to use the Wadi Agig area for what seems to have been a temporary settlement.⁵⁵

The Lower Khabur Valley shows two significant changes in the settlement pattern. The first is a remarkable increase in the number of small settlements. This is clearly an attempt to maximize agricultural production in the area by gaining better control of the agricultural

⁵⁵ Cf. Bernbeck 1994.

land during the Mittani period. The second change appears at the beginning of the Middle Assyrian period, when nearly all small sites were abandoned and most of population of the area inhabited cities and towns, almost all of which were located on the eastern, “Assyrian” bank of the river. This change may be explained as an attempt to increase control over the population in the area and, in addition, to make it less vulnerable to enemy raids.

3.2 Changes in the size and location of settlements within a site or site system

Excavations confirm that during the latter part of the second millennium BC several high tells in the Khabur Triangle (see below), which were built on third millennium deposits, were abandoned. Instead, new villages or farms were built in flat areas that were often located in the neighborhood of these tells. This tendency has rarely been remarked upon. Thus, it will be of interest here to check how typical this feature is of the Khabur Triangle area and if it is observable in other areas as well.

3.2.1 *The Upper Khabur*

The excavations at Tall Abu Hafur – the Tall Abu Hafur East cluster of sites, Tall Arbid, Tall Beydar and, to some extent, Tall Brak – yielded evidence of the abandonment of high mound and the establishment of a new settlement in a new place, usually at the base of a high tell.

Tall Abu Hafur is a small site located in the lower valley of Wadi Awij, on the right bank of an unnamed tributary of this seasonal stream. It was excavated by a Polish mission as part of the North Hasake Salvage Project between 1988 and 1990. The site yielded materials dating to the Ubaid, Uruk, and EJ III-IV periods. Another, later site was identified by the Polish mission on the opposite bank of the *wadi* and named Tall Abu Hafur East. It was excavated for one season in 1990 and yielded strata beginning with the Mittani period and continuing into the first millennium BC.

A similar situation can be found at Tall Beydar, the well known third millennium site. Tall Beydar had been abandoned towards the end of the Akkadian period and was resettled for a short period during Seleucid times. However, a substantial lower city located to the west of the village of Tall Beydar (and of the tell itself) was identified by a survey and excavated by soundings.⁵⁶ They revealed the presence of Mittani and Neo-Assyrian period occupation. This flat site, called Tall Beydar II, reached about 100 ha in area during Neo Assyrian times. Bertille Lyonnet⁵⁷ did not identify this tell in her survey, although she noted the

⁵⁶ Brettschneider 1997.

⁵⁷ Lyonnet 2000, 22.34, fig. 9.

presence of a minor occupation of these two periods on the main tell. Extensive excavations carried out there since 1987 have since disproven this observation.

The situation at Tall Arbid is a little more complicated, because the remains of Mittani settlement activity have been identified on two separate spots some 250 meters apart. Excavations on the highest part of the mound showed remains of a craft activity area and two Mittani graves.⁵⁸ A proper settlement was discovered on a secondary, much lower tell located to the west and designated as Sector A. This small tell was reoccupied during Post-Assyrian and Hellenistic times, while on the main tell no settlement later than the Mittani period has been found. Like Tall Beydar, the Arbid site was surveyed by Bertille Lyonnet, who indicated the presence of occupation dating to the Mittani period on the entire main tell and observed traces of minor occupation of Middle, Neo and Post Assyrian periods as well. Although she noted the presence of secondary tells lying to the west and north of the high mound,⁵⁹ she was unable to visit them. Once again, there is a remarkable discrepancy between the survey and the excavation results.

Tall Brak represents a slightly different case. The northern, highest part of the main tell was occupied during the second millennium BC, including the Mittani period, as revealed by the work of Max Mallowan⁶⁰ and David and Joan Oates.⁶¹ Remains of a palace, a small temple, and a number of houses were excavated there, indicating that the site was relatively important during the Mittani period. Yet, the area covered by the Mittani settlement (about 5 hectares) is just a fraction of the entire tell. However, the Mittani city included another, possibly extensive housing area located to the north of the main tell on the plain.⁶² It seems that the two most important buildings (the temple and the palace) were built on the main tell, probably for ritual or security reasons. Some houses that were located on the summit of the tell probably belonged to people serving the needs of these two structures, but the main housing area was situated in a more comfortable location on the plain.

The Khabur Survey provided further evidence for the transfer of settlements to a location at the bottom of a high mound during the Mittani period. Such a situation was observed at the site Tall Rhazal Tahtani (no. 51) on the Khabur, where a third millennium mound 10 meters high was surrounded by two lower terraces (4 m and 2 m high respectively) yielding Mittani and later material. Gre Zil Kabir (site no. 54) yielded evidence of an early second millennium BC settlement on the main tell, 18 meters high. Mittani sherds were collected mainly in an area located to the west of the tell and on two low hills located about 200 m west of the main site. At Tall Qattine (no. 7) the summit of the tell, about 20 m high, yielded mainly Uruk and third millennium material, while Mittani sherds were collected from a much lower part of the site, at a level of about four to eight meters above the ground.

58 Bieliński 2000; Bieliński 2002.

59 Cf. plan of the site, Lyonnet 2000, fig. 22.

60 Mallowan 1947, 78f.

61 Oates et al. 1997.

62 Oates 1993, 182f.

However, the situation described above is not common. Many tells on which Mittanian sherds were found are extensive mounds of medium height where sherds were evenly distributed over the whole surface of the tell (sites nos. 28, 34, 37, 45, 60). Several of the larger excavated sites fall into this category as well, for example Tall Barri, Tall Hamidiya, and, to a certain extent, Tall Mozan. One could add Tall Beizari, but the site has not been excavated yet.

Other sites where Mittani pottery was found included a high mound and one or two lower terraces that were occupied simultaneously. Site nos. 4, 14, 17, 24, 25, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 38, 50 belong to this category. Some of these sites (nos. 25, 31, 38, 45) were already settled during the MBA period and it is likely that the topography of these sites resulted from Habur Ware period developments.

Even though the tendency for Mittani period settlements to be located on lower terraces or on the plain in the vicinity of an earlier settlement mound seems to be quite apparent, it will still be necessary to carry out a full survey of the area before the importance of this trend can be evaluated. It is also difficult to speculate on the reasons that lie behind this change. One possible cause could be related to the availability of drinking water. It is easy to imagine that people moved to a less elevated area in order to avoid difficulties related to carrying water uphill, i.e. to a tell already 20 or more meters high. At some of the large sites settlement continued on the highest part of the mound. In these cases it is possible that the location of the settlement was determined by other factors – first of all by the presence of important religious or civil building(s) – i.e. temples or palaces. This was clearly the case with Tall Brak, Tall Mozan, Tall Hamidiye, and most likely of Tall Barri, as well.

3.2.2 *The Balikh Valley*

The tendency of settlements in the Upper Khabur to move to lower elevations in the Mittani period cannot be observed in the Balikh Valley survey data presented by Curvers.⁶³ Nevertheless, in the case of Tall Abyad (BS-280) Lyon noted the presence of Mittani sherds on the plain, ca. 70 m from the main mound.⁶⁴ In his opinion, their presence reflected a significant increase in the site area, which would cover not only the tell (0.8 ha in area, settlement of medium intensity) but also included a lower city. It is equally possible that they mark the location of a smaller settlement, independent of that on the main mound.

⁶³ Curvers 1991.

⁶⁴ Lyon 2000, 103.

3.2.3 *The Lower Khabur*

The Lower Khabur area also offers no evidence for the tendency observed in the Upper Khabur area. It is possible that this can be explained with the need to control and protect already existing, larger settlements in the area.

3.3 The transfer of local centers within a regional network

3.3.1 *The Upper Khabur*

The Khabur Survey did not reveal any potential urban centers from the earlier part of the second millennium BC in the Upper Khabur area. However, excavations show that during that time a number of large and certainly important settlements existed either within the region or on the border of the surveyed area (Tall Chagar Bazar, Tall Ailun, Tall Barri, Tall Brak and Tall Mozan). They constituted an important part of the settlement system. Cuneiform texts from Tall Chagar Bazar, but also from sites located outside the Khabur Triangle (Mari, Leilan, Kültepe) offer some information on the role of these settlements. It is clear that the Old Assyrian trade road to Anatolia crossed the area, probably running from Apum (likely Tall Muhammad Diyab) due west, to avoid the control of large urban centers located at Tall Mozan in the north and Tall Brak in the south. The tentative identification of Tall Arbid with Amaz, recently proposed by Jesper Eidem,⁶⁵ supports this reconstruction. Correspondence from the Mari archives and evidence from Tall Chagar Bazar⁶⁶ demonstrate that relatively small sites may have played a significant role in the administration of this area, especially when the regional political centers were located outside the surveyed area.

The number of large sites dating to the latter part of the second millennium in the surveyed area is again extremely small. As in the previous period, larger sites are located on the border of the survey area; besides the already mentioned tells of Brak, Barri, and Mozan, some new large towns appear during this period: Tall Fakhariya, Tall Hasake, and Tall Hamidiye. At least two of these sites (Tall Fakhariya/Waššukanni and Tall Hamidiye/Taidum) seem to have enjoyed, at least for some time, the position of capital cities of the Mittani state. The location of the above mentioned large sites is most likely determined by the presence of perennial rivers: the Khabur and the Jaghjagh. Only Tall Mozan does not fit into this pattern, but its location close to the mountains suggests that there were more favorable environmental conditions there.

During the Middle Assyrian period two tendencies can be observed. Again, no cities are present within the survey area; all the sites that are known to date are of a small size,

⁶⁵ Eidem 2008, 40.

⁶⁶ Talon 1997; Tunca – Baghdo 2008.

most of them bearing in fact only traces of settlement. Cities, as before, are either on the Khabur or on the Jaghjagh. Some of them (Brak, Hamidiye) have limited Middle Assyrian occupation that is visible, in fact, only in the public buildings of the preceding period. This phenomenon indicates that the Assyrians maintained the administrative functions of these older buildings. Other cities (Fakhariya, Barri) seem to flourish under the new rule.

3.3.2 *The Balikh Valley*

As was already mentioned, the Balikh Valley survey revealed a significant continuity in the distribution and size of local centers throughout most of the second millennium BC.

During the Middle Bronze Age local centers can be identified both in the Balikh Valley and outside of it. Local centers outside the Balikh Valley still influenced the area under scrutiny. Tall Bi'a/Tuttul is a good example of such a site. Located in the Euphrates Valley, close to the Balikh-Euphrates confluence, it clearly exercised economic and political dominance over at least the southernmost part of the Balikh Valley. This influence is illustrated by an Old Babylonian text from Mari (TH.72.1) that mentions herds of cattle dispatched to the Balikh Valley for grazing.⁶⁷ Texts from Tuttul provide evidence for at least four settlements located most likely in the Balikh valley: Şerda and Ahuna, located relatively close to Tuttul, and Šubat-Šamaš and Zalpa (tentatively identified with Tall Hammam at-Turkman), further upstream. The area controlled by Tuttul was divided into two provinces: the southern one, administered directly from Tuttul, and the northern one, with a seat in the city of Šubat-Šamaš.⁶⁸

This situation corresponds to the one documented by the Balikh survey. Two clusters of sites are apparent in the southern part of the valley. Tall Seman (BS-83), on the western bank, and BS-84, located on the opposite side of the river, about 30 km north of Tall Bi'a as the crow flies, together formed a center of one such cluster (aggregate area of 17–19 ha), which controlled the only larger agricultural plain in the southern part of the valley. Yet, it is impossible to safely identify Tall Seman either with Şerda or with Šubat-Šamaš. The second cluster is located further north, at a Balikh – Wadi Isa confluence and includes two equally ranking sites: Tall Khadriya (BS-139) and Tall Sabaniyeh (BS-117), whose aggregate area is about 11 ha.

The more densely settled northern part of the valley had five clusters of cites, which controlled shorter sections of the valley. These clusters were located around Tall Hammam at-Turkman (BS-175), Tall Jittal (BS-211), Tall Sahlan (BS-247), Tall Breri (BS-297) and Tall Abyad (BS-280). Of these, only Tall Sahlan is considerably larger (ca. 16 ha); other tells cover an area of ca. 5–6 hectares. However, one has to take into account the presence of Har-

⁶⁷ Birot 1973, 2.

⁶⁸ Krebernik 2001, 12f.

ran, only 45 km north of Tall Hammam. It is possible that its zone of influence covered the northernmost part of the Balikh drainage.

All the above-mentioned centers continue to exist and play the same role in the settlement pattern during the Mittani period. The only remarkable change is a reduction in area of the largest sites (for instance Tall Bi'a from 25 to 11 ha, Tall Sahlan from 16 to 8.3 ha, etc.). Yet, the analysis of interactions between sites reveals that the network of the settlements remains unaltered.⁶⁹

It is remarkable that pairs of settlements lying on the opposite banks of the Balikh (one is Tall Seman, and the other BS-84) cease to exist in the latter part of the second millennium; only Tall Sahlan continues to be intensively settled. As settlements located in such places are often considered to indicate river crossings, this phenomenon may be explained in two different ways. Either the Balikh was easier to cross during the latter part of the second millennium BC, or trade roads shifted and earlier river crossings lost their significance.

Drastic changes took place during the Middle Assyrian period. Most of the earlier settlements, which had been occupied throughout the earlier part of the second millennium BC, were abandoned. Some excavated sites even show evidence of conflagration. Middle Assyrian settlements were then established, possibly after a short break, using some of the points occupied before. Yet, these settlements seem to be smaller than before. Finally, only one cluster of sites could be plotted on the map for this period, in the vicinity of Tall Sabi Abyad. This situation is probably a reflection of an administrative attempt to control and to exploit the central area of the valley. Cuneiform texts discovered at Tall Sabi Abyad, Tall Fakhariya and Tall Šeh Hamad inform us that a *dunnu* (fortified settlement) which was created at Tall Sabi Abyad was entrusted to a side branch of the royal family, whose members used to bear titles "the grand vizier" and "the king of Hanigalbat" and whose holdings included several villages located in the vicinity of the *dunnu*.⁷⁰

3.3.3 The Lower Khabur Valley

While the Middle Bronze period settlements in the Lower Habur Valley are relatively numerous (17 sites out of 33 settlements during the second millennium) a considerable number of these sites yielded a very limited number of sherds of the MBA date. A significant feature is that the presence of the MBA period is confirmed on all large sites, and on four of them (Tall Šeh Hamad, Tall Ašamsani, Tall Fadgami and Tall Taban) occupation continues throughout the second millennium BC. The number of sites located on the western bank of the river is only slightly lower than that of sites on the eastern bank. This was al-

69 Lyon 2000, 15.

70 Wiggermann 2000, 171–185.

ready the case during the Mittani period, when 44 % of sites were located on the western bank, while the remaining 56 % were on the eastern one.⁷¹ This indicates, in my opinion, that the Khabur Valley region was located in the core area of the state during the Mittanian period. The situation changed radically at the beginning of the Middle Assyrian period, when nearly all large settlements are located on the eastern side of the river (Šeh Hamad, Tunenir, Taban, Fadgami and Hasake), with the exception of Tall Agaga.⁷² The same distribution can be observed for smaller sites: 78 % of small sites dated to the Middle Assyrian period are located on the eastern bank of the river. The reason for this distribution must be related to the organization of the Assyrian state, whose center of political and administrative authority was located in the east, in the Tigris valley. Another reason for the location of most settlements on the “Assyrian” bank is possible antagonism towards Mittani-Hanigalbat, located in the west.

4 Conclusions

A review of the results of the surveys carried out in three areas of northern Mesopotamia reveals that in each of them settlement patterns developed differently during the second millennium BC.⁷³

The Khabur Triangle exhibited a relatively modest occupation during the Middle Bronze Age, especially in the western part of the area. This situation changed in the Mittani period, when both the number and the size of the settlements increased significantly. These observations are in contrast to results from other surveys that were carried out in the central and eastern part of northern Mesopotamia. In the Tall Leilan Survey a very high number of Middle Bronze Age sites (157) were discovered,⁷⁴ while for the latter part of the second millennium the number of sites dropped to about 25 % of this number.⁷⁵ The North Jazireh survey also shows a noticeable drop in the number of mid to late second millennium sites.⁷⁶ During the Middle Bronze Age the number of settlements remains stable and one can observe a considerable degree of continuity. By contrast, the intensity of occupation of the settlements changes from the Mittani to the Middle Assyrian period: only four Middle Assyrian sites were described as very intensively or intensively used, in contrast to 30 sites of the Mittani period. This drop in intensity of occupation may reflect a depopulation of the area.

71 Morandi Bonacossi 2008, 193.

72 Morandi Bonacossi 2008, 191.

73 A similar conclusion on development of settlement in the third and early second millennium BC was reached by Wossink 2009, 100, Fig. 5.14.

74 Ristvet 2005.

75 Rova, pers. comm.

76 Wilkinson – Tucker 1995, 59 f.; Wossink 2009, 81–85, 86–88, Figs. 5.9 f., offered a different interpretation of the situation in the North Jazireh Survey, suggesting a slow, but constant growth of settlement at least through the third and early second millennium BC.

The Balikh Drainage area showed a gradual drop in settlement density. Density peaked in the middle part of the MBA during the mid to late second millennium, affecting at first the southern part of the area. Yet, the settlement pattern of the Middle Bronze and Mittani period did not differ. Drastic changes appear during the Middle Assyrian period, when most of the older settlements were abandoned and a new, very limited network was reconstructed in the vicinity of Tall Sabi Abyad. While there were some small cities present in the Balikh Valley during the Middle Bronze, some of which were probably used as capital cities for small political entities, they lost their importance during the Late Bronze Age and shrank in size in favor of a large urban center located most likely in Harran.

The Khabur valley settlement consisted of a number of larger sites, most of which were occupied continuously during the second millennium BC. Thus, the changes in the settlement pattern concern mainly the number and the distribution of small sites. Their number increased during the Mittani period, and dropped radically in the subsequent period, when settlement was limited to urban sites only. These radical changes of the settlement pattern took place both at the beginning and at the end of the Mittani period.

Finally, two general observations may be added. The first one concerns the reliability of interpretations of field survey results. The Balikh Drainage Survey is a clear illustration of this problem. The same area which was studied by two different scholars (Curvers and Lyon) yielded quite different results. This situation may be to some extent related to a greater knowledge of second millennium BC pottery in northern Mesopotamia, in particular pottery of the latter part of the millennium. This allowed Lyon to re-evaluate some of the results of Curver's fieldwork. On the other hand, one has the impression that some of the results of the original study by Curvers are based on a misinterpretation of sources, for example, the division of the Mittani period material into two phases and of the MBA period into three phases, as well as mechanical estimations of site areas (for instance 0.1 ha when 1 sherd was identified).

The other remark, of a more general nature, concerns the already mentioned observation that each of the analyzed regions developed different settlement patterns during the second millennium BC. We have to leave it to historians to look for political, economic, social, or environmental reasons which could explain such a situation. For archaeologists studying settlement patterns in the Near East it is more important to understand that there is no single, uniform pattern of development or change throughout northern Mesopotamia. Consequently, each region has to be analyzed on its own, and only when such an analysis is concluded can its results be compared to other results in order to obtain a more general picture.

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The Settlement Pattern of the Western Upper Khabur from the Old Babylonian Period to the End of the Mittani Era

The region surrounding the Khabur river in northern Mesopotamia has been the object of intense study for the last twenty years. Recent research has built upon the pioneering work on the most ancient periods by Baron von Oppenheim (1931), Sir Max Mallowan (1936 and 1937) and Van Liere and Lauffray (1954–1955), as well as the work on more recent eras by Father Poidebard (1934) and H. Dillemann (1962). A number of archaeological field surveys¹ with widely different aims, scales, and methods have been carried out in the region, and over thirty tells, ranging from the pre-ceramic Neolithic to the Islamic period, including some of considerable size and importance, have been or are in the process of being excavated. Finally, the region has been a focus of research for the epigraphists of Mari because a major part of Zimrī-Līm's archives (18th century BC) deals with this area and offers abundant information about it.

The Upper Khabur clearly played an important role during the Mittani period: according to some scholars, Waššukanni and Taidu, Mittani's two capitals, were located in this region – one at the source of the Khabur at the site of Tall Fakhariya,² and the other either along the Jaghjagh at Tall Hamidiye³ or slightly more to the southeast at Tall Farfara.⁴ Nevertheless, we have few data regarding this period. The aim of this article is therefore to lay out the results of a field survey conducted under B. Lyonnet's direction in the western part of the Upper Khabur,⁵ in the triangle between the present-day cities of Hasseke, Qamishly and Ras-el-Ain, and to come to an understanding of the changes that occurred in the region between the Mittani period and the period that preceded it.

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** Centre National de la recherche Scientifique (CNRS) Nanterre – UMR 7041.

¹ In particular, D. Oates 1977, Röhlig – Kühne 1977–78 et 1983, Fielden 1981, Monchambert 1984, Meijer 1986, Stein – Wattenmaker 1990, Lyonnet 1992, Eidem – Warburton 1996, Wilkinson 2000, Hole 2002–3, Ristvet – Weiss 2005, Ur – Wilkinson 2008.

² Opitz 1927.

³ Haas – Wäfler 1985.

⁴ Ristvet – Weiss 2005.

⁵ Lyonnet 2000a.

Brief summary of the methods used during the field survey and for the analysis of the data⁶

The field survey was purposefully carried out on a large scale in the hope of reconstructing the history of settlements in the region from the earliest origins to the present day. Given the considerable number of tells and the impossibility of visiting them all, we chose our sites from a map with a scale of 1:200,000, made during the French Mandate, spreading them across the region as evenly as possible so as not to leave any large blank zones, except in places where previous studies had already been carried out.⁷ The most prominent tells were systematically chosen, as well as smaller mounds located in unusual environments. In total, 63 sites were visited. Their dimensions were measured by walking around the visible part of the tells.⁸ The potsherds were collected randomly but in large quantities (roughly fifteen tons); on the larger sites, it was carried out across the entire surface, which was successively divided into zones based on natural divisions visible to the naked eye. The satellite mounds surrounding the larger tells were for the most part also surveyed, except in cases where they were presently inhabited.

Unfortunately for our study of the Mittani period, the major settlement situated near Tall Beydar⁹ was too low to be seen on this map, and therefore was not surveyed. It is likewise unfortunate that Tall Fakhariya (T.6) yielded comparatively few potsherds (131.5 kg in ca. 3.5 ha): the site is largely occupied by cemeteries and quite 'urbanized,'¹⁰ making it extremely difficult to survey. Furthermore, it was not our original intention to collect potsherds on it as it had already been excavated in the past,¹¹ but rather to search for Khabur pottery at the request of the epigraphists working on the Mari texts. Our picture of that site is therefore necessarily incomplete.

We analyzed the ceramics that we collected in several phases. The first step of the study was dedicated individually to each site – and, when pertinent, to each zone. After sorting, counting, and describing all the potsherds, a first attempt at a general typology was made, and a certain number of redundant specimens were eliminated, although as a rule at least one sherd of each type was retained in the final selection.¹² In a second step,

6 A more detailed discussion of this subject can be found in Lyonnet 2000a.

7 The site of Chagar Bazar, for instance, where Mallowan began his investigation of this region and which is now under excavation since our survey began, will not be found here.

8 While our measurements can be contested and are often smaller than those given by the excavators (see, for example, Tall Beydar = T. 15 in our survey), at least they are consistent, because they are all based on the same system.

9 Bretschneider 1997. Unfortunately, there have been no large-scale excavations of this site, and it is considered to be later (Iron Age) in Wilkinson 2000 and Ur – Wilkinson 2008.

10 See Lyonnet 2000a, 21, 30 and 43.

11 See McEwan et al. 1958.

12 Note, however, that the number of the potsherds of each type that was kept is not proportional to the number of sherds originally collected, but depended mainly on their state of preservation. This means that one has to return to the original notes kept for each site to get the true picture of how representative the retained potsherds are.

a general typology was generated on the basis of the retained selected sherds. It covered all periods from the Ubaid¹³ up to the present day, and with it we made a first attempt at assigning periods – usually several centuries long – to each type or series of sherds.¹⁴ In the third step, the retained materials from each period were given to graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, or specialists in the relevant fields to refine the dating of each series and to study the distribution of settlements in preparation for the final publication. Finally, a comprehensive list of the provenance of the retained potsherds from each series, along with a precise description of each type and series including photos and drawings, was compiled.

For various reasons, certain participants have been unable to finish the work they began and, as a consequence, the results of this field survey have not yet been fully prepared for publication¹⁵ – although we still intend to publish them as soon as possible. However, the data from the first half of the second millennium BC, given to Xavier Faivre, have already been studied in greater details in his doctoral thesis (also unpublished). His results are given in this article and we have added as a complement to his work the quantitative data coming from the first step study of the field survey.

Before we go into the full details, however, it is important to summarize a certain number of facts concerning the environment in the region and how it relates to the major discoveries made during this field survey about the general settlement pattern.

Environmental conditions in the region

The region of the Upper Khabur, surrounded on three sides by mountains of modest size (Tur Abdin to the north, Jebel Abd-el Aziz to the southwest, and Jebel Sinjar to the southeast), appears in the form of a wide undulating plateau crossed by wadis with irregular flow. The majority of these wadis flow from the Tur Abdin in the north either directly into the Khabur or indirectly by way of the Jaghjagh. Due to a series of karstic springs in the Ras-el-Aïn region, the Khabur is the only waterway in the region today that flows year-round. The relatively uniform character of the landscape in this area has led many archeologists to consider it as having always been a single geographic entity.

Except for several zones shaped by basalt flows, the whole of the region is, at least in appearance, favorable for agriculture without irrigation. This, of course, depends essentially on the annual amounts of rainfall. Indeed, a 300mm isohyet, below which non-irrigated agriculture is usually risky, currently crosses the region from the northwest to the southeast, running parallel – a few kilometers to the north – to the upper course of the

¹³ The older periods of the Neolithic (Proto-Hassuna and Halaf) were treated separately, see Lyonnet 2000b.

¹⁴ These were the results that were shown in table 4 of Lyonnet 2000a.

¹⁵ Only volume I has appeared thus far (Lyonnet 2000b), three more volumes are in preparation.

Khabur. This line is however unstable and fluctuates more or less toward the northeast or southwest, depending on the year. As a result, the Khabur, though the only perennial body of water in the region, is located in a zone that is generally too dry for major agricultural production. In fact, the sites situated along its course between Ras-el-Aïn and Hasseke are for the most part of a very modest size compared to those that are found along the Jagh-jagh.

Environmental studies carried out during the field survey¹⁶ demonstrated certain climatic variations over time: a gradual desertification began in the fourth millennium BC and reached its apogee at the end of the third. This was followed by an arid and windy period which lasted until the middle of the second millennium BC, at which point the region seems to have returned to a more stable climate, close to present conditions.

Major results of the field survey concerning the early periods

One of the main results of the survey has been the identification of significant differences in the distribution of population within the study area throughout its history. These results have been considered as related to the above-mentioned division between the relatively humid zone in the northeast and the comparatively drier zone in the southwest of the Upper Khabur triangle.

Since the Pre-Halaf period, the southwestern part of the region has always had a lesser density of settlements than the northeast, as well as settlements of smaller size (Nieuwenhuyse 2000, see maps at figs. 73, 74, 76, 77).¹⁷ Until the end of the fourth millennium, it does not appear that this differentiation was reflected in the ceramic materials. But this begins to change during the third millennium: all the sites in the northeast yielded abundant quantities of potsherds painted or incised with “Ninivite 5” type decorations, while those to the southwest yielded almost none. Similarly, at the beginning of the second millennium, the pots painted in the “Habur pottery” style appear in abundance in the northeast, while only a few examples can be found in the southwest. This division in pottery styles between the two regions has been confirmed recently by other surveys¹⁸ as well as by excavations at a certain number of sites: in the southwest, the percentages of Ninivite 5 pottery unearthed are insignificant, while no “Habur” level at all has been discovered (see for instance Tall Beydar), in marked contrast to sites in the northeast (like at Tall Arbid, for example).

In so distinctly separating the northeastern part from the southwestern of the western Upper Khabur, we might add that the latter is more closely related to the so-called Middle

¹⁶ Courty 1994.

¹⁷ On this topic also see Nieuwenhuyse – Wilkinson 2008.

¹⁸ Wilkinson 2000; see Ur – Wilkinson 2008 for the region around Tall Beydar.

Khabur region, where numerous excavations and surveys have revealed similar pottery styles and the same specific ‘absences’ of “Ninivite 5” and “Habur” pottery.¹⁹

As far as the first half of the third millennium is concerned, this particular distribution of pottery together with, in the southwestern area, on the one hand, the outlying position of the Kranzhügel of Tall Beydar in comparison to the other settlements of this type, and with, on the other hand, the discovery of many small settlements dedicated to the storage of grain but with only few living spaces has led us to advance the hypothesis that there was a close relationship between this region and the more arid steppe between the Balikh, the Euphrates, and the Khabur and to consider that it was the domain of pastoralists who raised flocks, cultivated fodder, and lived a partly nomadic life between the river and the steppe.²⁰

As far as the first half of the second millennium is concerned, it has been proposed that even more nomadic peoples inhabited this region, leaving almost no trace of their existence apart from references in the texts from Mari.²¹ This hypothesis has received strong support from J.-M. Durand, who has come to consider the southwestern region as corresponding to the ‘steppe of the wadis’ of the Ida-Maraş, where Bensimalite groups came to graze their flocks.²²

However, the distinction between the northeast and southwest is not always as clear across history, perhaps because of a general southward movement of the 300mm isohyet, or perhaps for other, more political reasons. Our general analysis of the ceramics was suggesting for instance that the region to the southwest was resettled from the Mittani period onwards.²³ But, given that the pottery from this period was found in much smaller quantities than the pottery usually attributed to the Old Babylonian period, we were awaiting the final results of our in-depth study to confirm this claim.

A more detailed study of settlement during the first half of the second millennium

It is not always easy to determine exact dates for pottery collected during a field survey: in fact, it is rare for scholars to attempt to make chronological distinctions of less than 400 or 500 years based on such a data set.²⁴ There are many ceramic types that continue across (or straddle) two politically different time periods, and the military and political conquests

19 See, for example, Kulemann-Ossen 2009 regarding the first half of the second millennium based on the survey of the Middle Khabur. Tall Taban is the only site that could have been occupied during the second millennium until a phase pre-dating the Middle Assyrian period (Shibata 2009).

20 Lyonnet 1998; 2001; 2004; 2009.

21 Lyonnet 1996.

22 Durand 1998; 2004.

23 Lyonnet 2000a, 19 and tableau 4, p. 33–37.

24 See, for example, Wilkinson 2000 and Ur – Wilkinson 2008, who do not distinguish the Mittani period from the Khabur period.

that are conventionally used to mark history are rarely followed by an immediate or complete change in pottery styles.

Although the pottery of the Old Babylonian period (Khabur pottery) is very distinctive and can be clearly distinguished from that of the third millennium, certain characteristics, like a decorative design of horizontal bands and triangles, are still present in the Mittani period and in some cases even later. The shape of the pottery as well as the clay from which it was made, usually allow us to distinguish different periods, but certain types which started during the Old Babylonian epoch, like the flattened, horizontal rim, last until the beginning of the Mittanian era. Similarly, some types that appear during the Mittanian period survive well into the Middle Assyrian one. Added to this problem of the long duration of pottery types is the fact that some decorative designs, like the painted triangles, may also date to the end of the fourth or the beginning of the third millennium,²⁵ and that a certain number of Mittani pottery vessels take up forms known from a still older period (fourth millennium).²⁶

All of these problems could be easily resolved if each site were only inhabited during one period, but this occurs extremely rarely in this region. It is therefore necessary to regularly check the original notes taken for each site and for each zone in order to decide the relative importance of each occupation period in case of doubts, or at least to underline the problem when it is impossible to decide.

In the preliminary study of the material initially collected during the survey, a dividing line was proposed between the Old Babylonian period and Mittani period; the most densely inhabited sites for each period (as compared to less populous or uninhabited sites from the same era) were identified but not numerically ranked.²⁷ This work was later refined by X. Faivre,²⁸ who carried out his chronological identifications using only the potsherds that were actually retained in the third step of analysis. This allowed him to propose a more precise periodization, in which he separated the Old Babylonian phase from a “late Khabur/early Mittani” phase, which was in turn followed by the Mittani phase. The results he reached are given below (§ A). Further adjustments have been made using quantitative analysis based on the data from the first step of the study, that is on the totality of the collected material (§ B).

The results brought to light by these two approaches generally accord with each other as well as with the data supplied by a study on the population density at each of the surveyed sites. Nevertheless, it seems important to give individual accounts of these methods so as to show how they inform each other and how they will allow us in the end to discern more precisely the changes in settlement between the two major periods with which we are concerned.

25 See, for example, Koliński 2007.

26 Oates 1987.

27 Lyonnet 2000a, table 4, p. 33–37.

28 Faivre 1999.

A Study of the *retained* materials

A.1 The Old Babylonian Period (Table I and Fig. 1)

Faivre identified the typical assortment of pottery for this period on the basis of comparisons made between different sites, in particular with phase IX of Tall Muhammad Diyab. From the materials retained after the initial study, Faivre determined close to 4,000 sherds,²⁹ separated into 156 different pottery series by shape and decoration,³⁰ to be characteristic of this period. Table I gives a list of the sites at which these sherds were collected, in decreasing order of quantity of sherds retained (left column).

In his study, nearly all the sites (60 of the 63 excavated) appear to have been inhabited during this period. But we see right away that more than half of these 4,000 potsherds (2242 + 52?) were gathered from a handful of sites, three of which are located in the northern part of the Wadi Aaouej basin (T. 31, 33, 32 in order of the size of the yield), two in the basin of a wadi without name between the Wadi Dara and the Jaghjagh (T. 45 and 42), and one on the Wadi Dara (T. 38).³¹ Four further sites indicate relatively large settlements (more than 100 sherds retained at each) – T. 24, 25, 34, 43 – while another eleven seem to have been only lightly inhabited, indicated by the retention at each of between 45 and 90 sherds for this period (T. 7, 13, 18, 28, 40, 41, 44, 53, 54, 56, 70). The remaining sites yielded only a very modest quantity of potsherds (fewer than 30). It is to be noticed that the 14 sites situated along the Khabur (1 to 11, 49, 50, 61) are all part of this last category except for T.7, situated at the source of the Khabur near Fakhariya.

Faivre's study did not calculate the population density, as based on settlement size, at each of these sites. If we continue to base our projections solely on the number of potsherds retained during the third step of our study, this changes the classification that was previously established (right column). Among the ten most densely occupied sites in this period, seven cover an area of less than 1.5 ha: they are, in order of classification, T. 43, 32, 23, 25, 34, 40, 39. Another two have an area of between 1.5 ha and 4 ha (T. 31 and T.38). And only one, T. 33, covers a surface area of more than 4 ha. The overall picture of population distribution is mostly unchanged by this calculation, as eight of these ten sites are located in the northern part of the surveyed zone and none is on the Khabur (Fig. 1). We note, however, that the most densely occupied site, T. 43, had before been ranked as the tenth largest, and that T. 45 and 42 move from third and fourth largest to thirteenth and nineteenth respectively, while T.23 goes from twenty-third to third.

29 Faivre 1999, where the numbers vary: vol. I, p. 42 (4044 = total of the numbers indicated in the table p. 39–42) and p. 110 (3959 + 129 = 4088) and vol. II, fig. 120 (= 3977 + 129?).

30 Series are more precise than types, and this explains that they are more numerous.

31 Faivre 1999, fig. 120.

Table 1 | List of sites that yielded potsherds dating to the Old Babylonian period, taken from the sample retained after the first selection. They are ordered according to the quantity of potsherds retained (left column) and by density of population (right column). Potsherds followed by a question mark were not counted.

Ranking of sites according to number of retained potsherds		Drainage Basin	Surface	Number of retained potsherds from the Old Babylonian Period	Ranking according to population density	
Ranking	Site			Total = 3977 + 129?	No. of potsherds/ha	Ranking
1	31 (Tell Dibak)	Wadi Aouejj, left bank	ca. 2,30 ha	541 + 4?	235,21	4
2	33 (Tell Hanoua)	Wadi Aouejj, left bank	ca. 3,90 ha	404 + 5?	103,58	10
3	45 (Tell Ahmar)	Unnamed Wadi / Jaghjagh	4,90 ha	397 + 13?	81,02	13
4	42 (Tell Arbid)	Unnamed Wadi / Jaghjagh	7 ha	356 + 10?	50,85	19
5	32 (Tell Kdich)	Wadi Aouejj, left bank	0,80 ha	285 + 9?	356,25	2
6	38 (Tell Aïn el Qurd)	Wadi Dara	2,42 ha	259 + 11?	107,02	9
7	25 (Tell Arade)	Wadi Zerkan	1 ha	142 + 5?	142	5
8	34 (Tell Atach)	Unnamed Wadi / Jaghjagh	1,20 ha	141 + 9?	117,5	6
9	24 (Tell Hermel)	Wadi Zerkan	2 ha	135 + 1?	67,5	15
10	43 (Tell Farho)	Wadi Dara	ca. 0,30 ha	110	366,66	1
11	41 (Tell Baqar)	Unnamed Wadi / Dara	2,20 ha	90 + 3?	40,90	20
12	54 (Guir Zil Kabir)	Unnamed Wadi / Jaghjagh	7 ha	89 + 2?	12,71	35
13	70 (Tell Badan)	Jaghjagh, right bank	17,50 ha	71 + 5?	4,05	49
14	44 (Guir Diouane)	Unnamed Wadi / Jaghjagh	0,80 ha	71 + 1?	88,75	12

Ranking of sites according to number of retained potsherds		Drainage Basin	Surface	Number of retained potsherds from the Old Babylonian Period	Ranking according to population density	
Ranking	Site			Total = 3977 + 129?	No. of potsherds/ha	Ranking
15	53 (Tell Kourdis)	Unnamed Wadi / Jaghjagh	2 ha	66	33	24
16	40 (Tell Qattine)	Unnamed Wadi / Dara	0,50 ha	56 + 1?	112	7
17	18 (Tell el Ward Charqi)	Wadi Zerkan	ca.1 ha	52 + 6?	52	18
18	13 (Tell Aïn el Abed)	Wadi Zerkan / spring	0,50 ha	47 + 2?	94	11
19	7 (Tell Qattine)	Khabur, right bank	5 ha	46 + 2?	9,2	40
20	56 (Tell Nurek)	Wadi Dara	6 ha	46 + 1?	7,6	44
21	28 (Tell Hassek)	Unnamed Wadi/ Aouejj, right bank	1,50 ha	45	30	25
22	4 (Tell Umm el Asafir)	Khabur, left bank	0,50 ha	31 + 2?	62	16
23	23 (Tell Aluq Charqi)	Jirjirb Gharbi	0,10 ha	30 + 1?	300	3
24	2 (Tell Umm Urhafa)	Khabur, left bank	1,50 ha	30	20	31
25	26 (Tell Dabach)	Wadi Seher / Zerkan	3,50 ha	27 + 1?	7,71	43
26	57 (Tell Chil Virane)	Without wadi / Dara	1,15 ha	24 + 4?	20,86	30
27	51 (Tell Rhazal Tahtani)	Unnamed Wadi / Zerkan	1,50 ha	22 + 2?	14,66	33
28	39 (Tell Khaneke)	Spring / Wadi Dara	0,20 ha	22	110	8
29	37 (Tell Bati)	Wadi Rijla / Jaghjagh	5 ha	22	4,4	48

Ranking of sites according to number of retained potsherds		Drainage Basin	Surface	Number of retained potsherds from the Old Babylonian Period	Ranking according to population density	
Ranking	Site			Total = 3977 + 129?	No. of potsherds/ha	Ranking
30	29 (Tell Aswad Tahtani)	Unnamed Wadi / Jaghjagh	1 ha	21 + 1?	21	29
31	14 (Tell Jamilo)	Wadi Aaoueij, left bank	8 ha	20 + 2?	2,5	52
32	17 (Tell Effendi)	Unnamed Wadi / Jaghjagh	1,90 ha	19	10	38a
33	58 (Tell Dukri)	Unnamed Wadi / Dara	0,30 ha	18 + 1?	60	17
34	59 (Tell Jhach)	Unnamed Wadi / Dara	0,50 ha	18 + 1?	36	23
35	60 (Tell Tcholama Tahtani)	Unnamed Wadi / Dara	6 ha	17 + 3?	2,83	51
36	30 (Tell Berguil Buz)	Unnamed Wadi / Jaghjagh	0,60 ha	16	26,66	28
37	20 (Tell Jamus)	Jirjib	0,40 ha	15 + 3?	37,50	22
38	21 (Tell Barair Kabir)	Without Wadi / Jirjib	0,85 ha	15 + 1?	17,64	32
39	63 (Tell Abu Hjeira 3)	Wadi Awayj, right bank	Unknown	14 + 1?	?	?
40	50 (Tell Mularja)	Khabur, left bank	0,50 ha	14	28	27
41	3 (Tell Tawil)	Khabur, left bank	1 ha	12 + 4?	12	36
42	11 (Tell Atchach)	Khabur, right bank	1 ha	11 + 1?	11	37
43	22 (Tell ed Daudiye)	Without wadi / Jirjib	1,50 ha	10 + 1?	6,66	45
44	1 (Tell Rommane)	Khabur, left bank	2,50 ha	10	4	50
45	15 (Tell Beydar)	Wadi Aaoueij, right bank	14,50 ha	9 + 1?	0,62	57
46	35 (Tell Avguir Fawqani)	Unnamed Wadi / Dara	0,30 ha	9 + 1?	30	25a

Ranking of sites according to number of retained potsherds		Drainage Basin	Surface	Number of retained potsherds from the Old Babylonian Period	Ranking according to population density	
Ranking	Site			Total = 3977 + 129?	No. of potsherds/ha	Ranking
47	5 (Tell Asnane Fawqani)	Khabur, left bank	1,50 ha	8 + 2?	5,33	46
48	16 (Tell Khatun)	Wadi Aoueij, left bank	1,20 ha	6 + 3?	5	47
49	12 (Tell Ashnane Charqi)	Wadi Zerkani	0,75 ha	6	8	41
50	11 ter (unnamed)	Khabur, right bank	0,07 ha	5	71,42	14
51	55 (Tell Dibe)	Unnamed Wadi / Jaghjagh	0,50 ha	5	10	38
52	19 (Tell Mohammad)	Without Wadi / Zerkani	0,10 ha	4 + 1?	40	21
53	27 (Tell ech Chour Gharbi)	Unnamed Wadi / Zerkani	6 ha	4	0,66	56
54	48 (without name)	Wadi Aaoueij, right bank	0,50 ha	4	8	41a
55	47 (Tell Abu Hufur modern)	Wadi Aoueij, right bank	2,60 ha	3	1,15	54
56	52 (Tell Bughaz)	"sea" / Wadi Zerkani	0,15 ha	2 + 1?	13,33	34
57	6 (Tell Fakhariya)	Khabur, left bank	3,50 ha	2	0,57	58
58	8 (Tell Majdel)	Khabur, right bank	25 ha	2	0,08	59
59	36 (Tell Fatme)	Unnamed / Jaghjagh	0,50 ha	1 + 1?	2	53
60	61 (Tell Ghara)	Khabur, left bank	1 ha	1	1	55

A.2 The Late Khabur and/or Early Mittani Periods (Table II and Fig.1)

Based on a comparison with the material from Muhammad Diyab VIII and other sites, certain pottery types, classified by shape and decoration and amounting to 21 series (eight of which we are still uncertain about³²) based on 46 potsherds, were attributed to this period.³³

The fact that there are six times fewer diagnostic series in this period than in the previous one cannot be assumed to correctly reflect this phase of settlement. In addition, as mentioned above, the majority of earlier series continued over the course of this phase. As a result, the numbers obtained are insufficient to allow us to make an estimate of the size of the population in this phase, and can only confirm which sites were in fact inhabited during that time.

More than a third of the retained sherds come from T.38 (14 sherds); the next largest group comes from T. 45 (6 sherds) and T. 31 gives us only 4 sherds, of which 3 are uncertain. T. 7, 23, 24, 25, 32, and 42 each yielded two potsherds from this period. Finally, the sites T. 1, 2, 13, 14, 16, 28, 34, 41, 43, 44, 53, 54 and 58 each yielded only one potsherd from this phase.

Our image regarding the population of this period does not suggest major changes to the preceding period; for the most part we see the same sites organized in the same ways.

If we take not only the total number of retained potsherds into consideration but also the surface area of the tells, we observe that seven of the most densely populated sites (right column) covered less than 1.5 ha each (T. 23, 43, 58, 32, 25, 13, 44), two (T. 38 and 24) had a surface area between 1.5 and 4 ha, and one (T. 45) was over 4 ha. The majority of them were already densely populated during the previous period and the map indicating the distribution of the population among sites barely changes (Fig. 1).

³² Faivre 1999, vol. 1, 237.

³³ Faivre 1999, vol. 2, fig. 147.

Table II | List of sites that yielded potsherds dating to the late Khabur and/or early Mittani period, taken from the sample retained after the first selection. They are sorted according to the quantity of sherds retained (left column) and by population density (right column). Potsherds followed by a question mark were not counted.

Ranking of sites according to number of retained potsherds		Drainage Basin	Surface	Number of retained potsherds of the later Khabur and/or the beginning of the Mittani Period	Ranking according to population density	
Ranking	Site			Total = 46 + 3 ?	No. of potsherds/ha	Ranking
1	38 (Tell Aïn el Qurd)	Wadi Dara	2,42 ha	14	5,6	2
2	45 (Tell Ahmar)	Unnamed Wadi / Jaghjagh	4,90 ha	6	1,2	9
3	31 (Tell Dibak)	Wadi Aouejj, left bank	ca. 2,30 ha	1 + 3 ?	0,43	17
4	7 (Tell Qattine)	Khabur, right bank	5 ha	2	0,4	18
5	23 (Tell Aluq Charqi)	Jirjirb Gharbi	0,10 ha	2	20	1
6	24 (Tell Hermel)	Wadi Zerkan	2 ha	2	1	10
7	25 (Tell Arade)	Wadi Zerkan	1 ha	2	2	6
8	32 (Tell Kdich)	Wadi Aouejj, left bank	0,80 ha	2	2,5	5
9	42 (Tell Arbid)	Unnamed Wadi / Jaghjagh	7 ha	2	0,28	20
10	1 (Tell Rommane)	Khabur, left bank	2,50 ha	1	0,4	18a
11	2 (Tell Umm Urhafa)	Khabur, left bank	1,50 ha	1	0,66	13
12	13 (Tell Aïn el Abed)	Wadi Zerkan / spring	0,50 ha	1	2	6a
13	14 (Tell Jamilo)	Wadi Aouejj, left bank	8 ha	1	0,12	22

Ranking of sites according to number of retained potsherds		Drainage Basin	Surface	Number of retained potsherds of the later Khabur and/or the beginning of the Mittani Period	Ranking according to population density	
Ranking	Site			Total = 46 + 3 ?	No. of potsherds/ha	Ranking
14	16 (Tell Khatun)	Wadi Aouejj, left bank	1,20 ha	1	0,83	11
15	28 (Tell Hassek)	Unnamed Wadi / Aouejj, right bank	1,50 ha	1	0,66	13a
16	34 (Tell Atach)	Unnamed Wadi / Jaghjagh	1,20 ha	1	0,83	11a
17	41 (Tell Baqar)	Unnamed Wadi / Dara	2,20 ha	1	0,45	16
18	43 (Tell Farho)	Wadi Dara	ca. 0,30 ha	1	3,33	3
19	44 (Guir Diouane)	Unnamed Wadi / Jaghjagh	0,80 ha	1	1,25	8
20	53 (Tell Kourdiss)	Unnamed Wadi / Jaghjagh	2 ha	1	0,5	15
21	54 (Tell Guire Zil Kebir)	Unnamed Wadi / Jaghjagh	7 ha	1	0,14	21
22	58 (Tell Dukri)	Unnamed Wadi / Dara	0,30 ha	1	3,33	3a

A.3 The Mittani Period (Table III and Fig. 2)

The pottery of this period was defined by comparison to the material from Muhammad Diyab VII and other sites. There are 133 series, 14 of which are uncertain,³⁴ based upon more than 2,000 of the retained potsherds (1987 + 135?). This is slightly less than the number of diagnostic series used for the Old Babylonian period while the number of potsherds retained is roughly half as much. Nevertheless, this sample seems sufficient for making a comparison between the Mittani and the Old Babylonian periods.

Table III shows that almost as many sites are occupied in the Mittani period as during the preceding period, but almost one third of the potsherds come from five sites, where from 100 to 200 potsherds have been retained (T. 38, 45, 28, 42, and 32). Eight other sites delivered between 50 and 100 potsherds (T. 31, 24, 33, 34, 70, 2, 54 and 4); twenty sites yielded between ca. 20 and 40; and 25 other sites provided between 1 and 15 potsherds of this period.

If we examine the relationship between the number of potsherds in this period and the surface area of the tell, we observe that eight of the ten most densely populated sites are less than 1.5 ha (T. 32, 4, 43, 34, 13, 19, 44, 40), while two have a surface area of between 1.5 and 4 ha (T. 28 and 38). Three of the sites that are the most densely populated during the Mittani period were not settled in the earlier periods: T. 4, 19, and 28, while another two, T. 13 and 44, appeared only at the end of the late Khabur/early Mittani period. We therefore distinctly see a change in the settlement pattern of the region, most clearly with the emergence of a distinct settlement in the western zone, especially along the Khabur itself (Fig. 2).

34 Faivre 1999, vol. I, 259–260.

Table III | List of sites that yielded potsherds dating to the Mittani period, taken from the material retained after the first selection. They are ordered according to the quantity of potsherds retained (left column) and by population density (right column). Potsherds followed by a question mark were not counted.

Ranking of sites according to number of retained potsherds		Drainage Basin	Surface	Number of retained potsherds of the Mittani Period	Ranking according to population density	
Ranking	Site			Total = 1987 + 135?	No. of potsherds/ha	Ranking
1	38 (Tell Ain el Qurd)	Wadi Dara		196 + 6?	78,4	5
2	45 (Tell Ahmar)	Unnamed Wadi/Jaghjagh	4,90 ha	165 + 15?	33	19
3	28 (Tell Hassek)	Unnamed Wadi/Aoueij, right bank	1,50 ha	159 + 1?	106	3
4	42 (Tell Arbid)	Unnamed Wadi/Jaghjagh	7 ha	112 + 16?	16	26
5 ^e	32 (Tell Kdich)	Aoueij, left bank	0,80 ha	98 + 5?	122,5	1
6	31 (Tell Dibak)	Aoueij, left bank	ca. 2,30 ha	78 + 7?	33,91	18
7	24 (Tell Hermel)	Wadi Zerkan	2 ha	75 + 6?	37,5	16
8	33 (Tell Hanoua)	Aoueij, left bank	3,90 ha	68 + 2?	17	25
9	34 (Tell Atach)	Unnamed Wadi/Jaghjagh	1,20 ha	65 + 6?	54,16	6
10	70 (Tell Badan)	Jaghjagh, right bank	17,50 ha	63 + 13?	3,6	45
11	2 (Tell Umm Urhafa)	Khabur	1,50 ha	60 + 1?	40	12
12	54 (Tell Guire Zil Kebir)	Unnamed Wadi/Jaghjagh	7 ha	58 + 2?	8,28	33
13	4 (Tell Umm el Asafir)	Khabur, left bank	0,50 ha	54 + 4?	108	2
14	37 (Tell Bati)	Rijla / Jaghjagh	5 ha	41 + 2?	8,2	34
15	25 (Tell Arade)	Wadi Zerkan	1 ha	41	41	11
16	57 (Tell Chil Virane)	Without wadi / Dara	1,15 ha	40 + 1?	34,78	17
17	51 (Tell Rhazal Tahtani)	Unnamed / Zerkan	1,50 ha	39 + 3?	26	22
18	44 (Guir Diouane)	Unnamed wadi / Jaghjagh	0,80 ha	37 + 5?	46,25	9

Ranking of sites according to number of retained potsherds		Drainage Basin	Surface	Number of retained potsherds of the Mittani Period	Ranking according to population density	
Ranking	Site			Total = 1987 + 135?	No. of potsherds/ha	Ranking
19	14 (Tell Jamilo)	Aoueij	8 ha	37 + 2?	4,62	44
20	18 (Tell el Ward Charqi)	Wadi Zerkan	ca. 1 ha	33 + 3?	33	19a
21	26 (Tell Dabach)	Seher/Zerkan	3,50 ha	30	8,57	32
22	7 (Tell Qattine)	Khabur	5 ha	29 + 4?	5,8	41
23	15 (Tell Beydar)	Aoueij	14,50 ha	29 + 3?	2	50
24	43 (Tell Farho)	Wadi Dara	ca. 0,30 ha	27	90	4
25	13 (Tell Aïn el Abed)	Wadi Zerkan / spring	0,50 ha	26 + 1?	52	7
26	53 (Tell Kourdis)	Unnamed Wadi / Jaghjagh	2 ha	25 + 1?	12,5	29
27	17 (Tell Effendi)	Unnamed / Jaghjagh	1,90 ha	25	13,15	27
28	63 (Tell Abu Hjeira 3)	Aoueij	Unknown	25	?	?
29	30 (Tell Berguïl Buz)	Unnamed / Jaghjagh	0,60 ha	24 + 2?	40	12a
30	40 (Tell Kourdis)	Unnamed Wadi/Dara	0,50 ha	23 + 1?	46	10
31	41 (Tell Baqar)	Unnamed Wadi / Dara	2,20 ha	21 + 3?	9,54	31
32	60 (Tell Tcholama Tahtani)	Unnamed / Dara	6 ha	21	3,5	46
33	50 (Tell Mugarja)	Khabur	0,50 ha	19 + 2?	38	15
34	27 (Tell ech Chour Gharbi)	Unnamed / Zerkan	6 ha	14	2,33	49
35	1 (Tell Rommane)	Khabur	2,50 ha	12 + 1?	4,8	42
36	21 (Tell Barair Kabir)	Without wadi / Jirjib	0,85 ha	11	12,94	28
37	35 (Tell Avguir Fawqani)	Unnamed / Dara	0,30 ha	8 + 2?	26,66	21
38	20 (Tell Jamus)	Jirjib	0,40 ha	8 + 1?	20	23

Ranking of sites according to number of retained potsherds		Drainage Basin	Surface	Number of retained potsherds of the Mittani Period	Ranking according to population density	
Ranking	Site			Total = 1987 + 135 ²	No. of potsherds/ha	Ranking
39	29 (Tell Aswad Tahtani)	Unnamed / Jaghjagh	1 ha	8	8	35
40	22 (Tell ed Daudiye)	Without wadi / Jirjib	1,50 ha	7 + 1 ²	4,66	43
41	56 (Tell Qattine)	Wadi Dara	6 ha	7 + 1 ²	1,16	55
42	3 (Tell Tawil)	Khabur	1 ha	7	7	37
43	59 (Tell Jhach)	Unnamed / Dara	0,50 ha	6 + 2 ²	12	30
44	11 (Tell Atchach)	Khabur	1 ha	6 + 1 ²	6	39
45	8 (Tell Majdel)	Khabur	25 ha	6	0,24	57
46	12 (Tell Ashnane Charqi)	Zerkan	0,75 ha	6	8	35a
47	6 (Tell Fakhariya)	Khabur	3,50 ha	5	1,42	54
48	19 (Tell Mohammad)	Without wadi / Zerkan	0,10 ha	5	50	8
49	47 (Tell Abu Hufur modern)	Aouejj	2,60 ha	5	1,92	53
50	5 (Tell Asnane Fawqani)	Khabur	1,50 ha	4 + 2 ²	2,66	47
51	39 (Tell Khaneke)	Source / Dara	0,20 ha	4	20	23a
52	23 (Tell Aluq Charqi)	Jirjirb Gharbi	0,10 ha	4	40	12b
53	16 (Tell Khatun)	Aouejj	1,20 ha	3	2,5	48
54	48 (unnamed)	Aouejj	0,50 ha	3	6	39a
55	58 (Tell Dukri)	Unnamed / Dara	0,30 ha	2	6,66	38
56	36 (Tell Fatme)	Unnamed / Jaghjagh	0,50 ha	1 + 1 ²	2	50a
57	55 (Tell Dibe)	Unnamed / Jaghjagh	0,50 ha	1 + 1 ²	2	50b
58	10 (Tell Tawila)	Khabur	1,60 ha	1	0,62	56

B Study based on the material initially collected during the survey³⁵

It is unfortunate that there is no possibility to directly compare the material initially collected with the data presented above, as they are based on different typological and chronological analyses. For example, in our notes on the initial material, the intermediary period, mentioned here as 'late Khabur/early Mittani', had not yet been identified. Overall, also, the typology for the general collection is less complex. In addition, I do not wish to claim that this article definitively identifies the chronological affiliations of each ceramic series; instead, the work presented below is based on my general impressions of the material as it was initially surveyed on each site. This approach is certainly less precise than the method described above, but I believe that it nevertheless allows us to better glean general tendencies. In the end, we will see that this method yielded results similar to Faivre's work.

B.1 The Khabur Period (Table IV and Fig. 1)

We see first of all that the number of sites which yielded material from this period is limited – 24 of the 63 surveyed. None of those identified as having a limited number of potsherds in the preceeding study appears here. Next we notice that the quantity of potsherds collected varies greatly by site, from more than 1,000 to only 7 potsherds. A hierarchy of sites is then evident, formed neatly into discrete groups: one site, Tall Dibak (31) on the wadi Aaoueij, stands in a category by itself with more than 1,000 potsherds collected for this period. Another three sites each yielded roughly 500 potsherds (T. 32, 33, and 42). Four sites produced between 200 and 300 (T. 45, 38, 25, 43), and finally a group of four much smaller sites each furnished between 70 and 100 potsherds (T. 53, 24, 34, 41). The last twelve sites each produced less than 50 potsherds.

Although the ordering among the largest sites is here sometimes slightly different than that proposed by Faivre in his analysis, we nevertheless see that the sites are the same. The absence of Khabur-period potsherds along the river is however much more evident here, as only T. 7 yielded any at all.

Certain sites were unoccupied except on a small part of the tell,³⁶ a fact which is not available in the earlier study. This has important consequences for our understanding of the population density of a site, and therefore for its classification. Once again, the order is slightly modified in relation to what was proposed earlier, but the changes are relatively small. The two most densely populated sites (T. 32 and 43) are both less than 1 ha. Only T. 31

35 Here we only counted the potsherds that were diagnostic in either form or decoration but not the shapeless potsherds.

36 In these cases, the area for which an occupation is attested is indicated by a capital letter in the column of the number of potsherds collected.

and 33, which are geographically quite close to each other, ranked third and sixth respectively for population density. Although they have a larger surface area, they are still relatively small (2.3 and 3.9 ha). The tells of larger dimensions (larger than 5 ha), do not appear before number 13 on the table (T. 42, 45, 56, 54), which seems to indicate that, despite their considerable geographic size, they were not very densely populated at this time.

Table IV | List of sites, which yielded potsherds dating to the “Khabur period”, based on analysis of all potsherds originally collected. Sites are ordered by quantity of potsherds collected (left column) and by order of density measured as a ratio of quantity to surface (right column).

Ranking of sites according to number of collected potsherds		Drainage Basin	Surface	Number of collected potsherds of the Khabur Period	Ranking according to population density	
Ranking	Site			Total = 4517	Number of potsherds/ha	Ranking
1	31 (Tell Dibak)	Aouej, left bank	ca. 2,30 ha	1199	521,30	3
2	32 (Tell Kdich)	Aouej, left bank	0,80 ha	586	732,5	1
3	33 (Tell Hanoua)	Aouej, left bank	ca. 3,90 ha	580	148,71	6
4	42 (Tell Arbid)	Unnamed Wadi / Jaghjagh	7 ha	493	70,42	13
5	45 (Tell Ahmar)	Unnamed Wadi / Jaghjagh	4,90 ha	284	57,95	14
6	38 (Tell Aïn el Qurd)	Wadi Dara	2,42 ha	276	114,04	8
7	25 (Tell Arade)	Wadi Zerkan	1 ha	230	230	5
8	43 (Tell Farho)	Wadi Dara	ca. 0,30 ha	210	700	2
9	53 (Tell Kourdiss)	Unnamed Wadi / Jaghjagh	2 ha	99	49,5	16
10	24 (Tell Hermel)	Wadi Zerkan	2 ha	95	47,5	17
11	34 (Tell Atach)	Unnamed Wadi / Jaghjagh	1,20 ha	86	71,66	12
12	41 (Tell Baqar)	Unnamed Wadi / Dara	2,20 ha	72	32,72	19
13	40 (Tell Qattine)	Unnamed Wadi / Dara	0,50 ha	46	92	10

Ranking of sites according to number of collected potsherds		Drainage Basin	Surface	Number of collected potsherds of the Khabur Period	Ranking according to population density	
Ranking	Site			Total = 4517	Number of potsherds/ha	Ranking
14	44 (Guir Diouane)	Unnamed Wadi / Jaghjagh	0,80 ha	43	53,75	15
15e	56 (Tell Nurek)	Wadi Dara	6 ha	41	6,83	21
16	58 (Tell Dukri)	Unnamed Wadi / Dara	0,30 ha but A only = 0,20 ha	29 (A)	145	7
17	23 (Tell Aluq Charqi)	Jirjib Gharbi	0,10 ha	25	250	4
18	54 (Guir Zil Kabir)	Unnamed Wadi / Jaghjagh	7 ha	24	3,42	22
19	18 (Tell el Ward Charqi)	Wadi Zerkan	ca. 1 ha	22	22	20
20	20 (Tell Jamus)	Jirjib	0,40 ha but A only = 0,20 ha	20 (A)	100	9
21	13 (Tell Aïn el Abed)	Wadi Zerkan / spring	0,50 ha	20	40	18
22	7 (Tell Qattine)	Khabur, right bank	5 ha – 0,30 (B)= 4,70 ha	15 (A, C)	3,19	23
23	29 (Tell Aswad Tahtani)	Unnamed Wadi / Jaghjagh	1 ha but A only = 0,18 ha	15 (A)	83,33	11
24	14 (Tell Jamilo)	Aoueij, left bank	8 ha, but A only = 3 ha	7 (A)	2,33	24

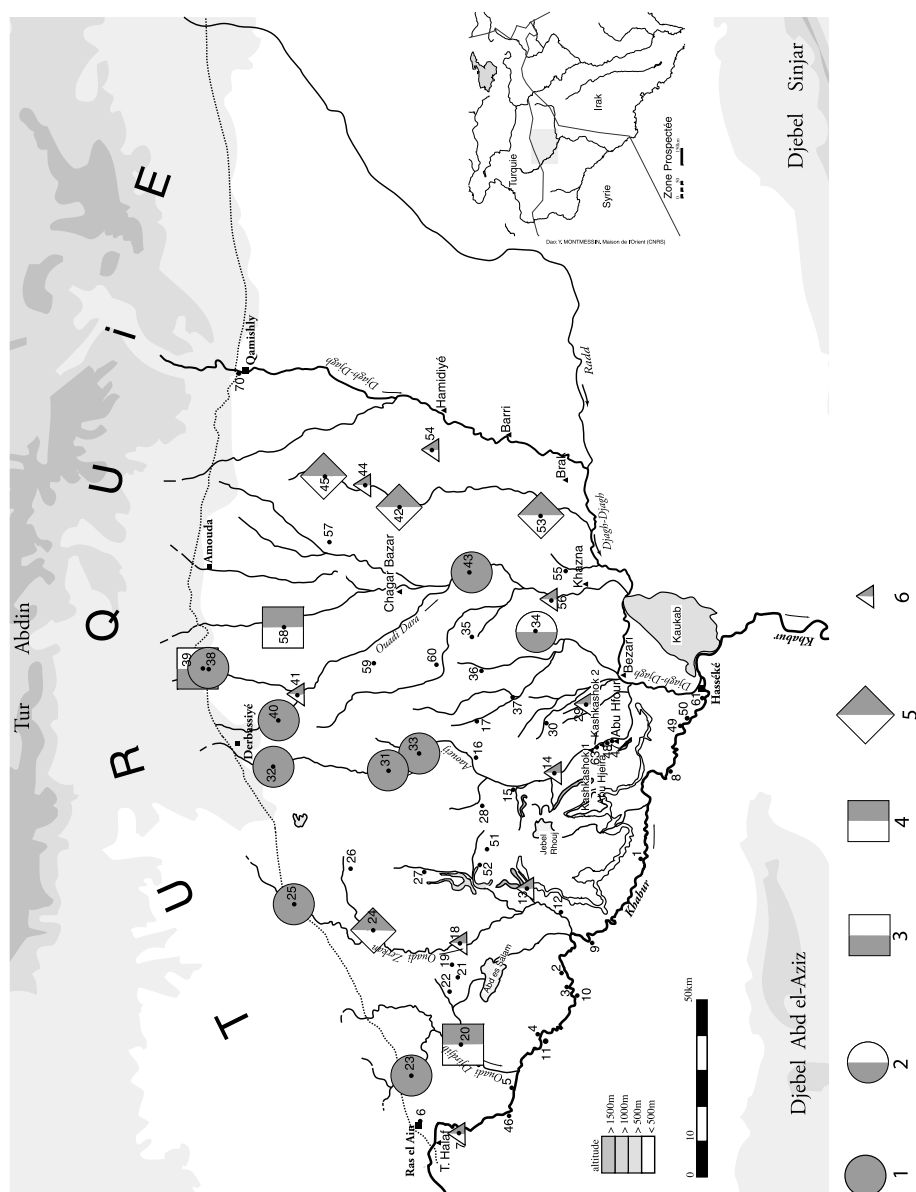


Fig. 1 | Distribution of settlements during the Old Babylonian period according to material from the survey.

- 1- The 10 most densely occupied sites, yielding the largest amount of sherds in the two studies (sherds *retained* and sherds *collected*).
- 2- The 10 most densely occupied sites, yielding the largest amount of sherds in the study of sherds *retained*.
- 3- The 10 most densely occupied sites from the study of sherds *retained*.
- 4- The 10 most densely occupied sites from the study of sherds *collected*.
- 5- The 10 sites yielding most sherds from sherds *collected*.
- 6- Other sites occupied according to the study of sherds *collected*.

B.2 The Mittani Period (Table V and Fig. 2)

In this period the number of settled sites – 53 in total – is more than double than that of the preceding period. Furthermore, we find that the sites are distributed across the entire region included in our survey. But the total number of collected potsherds (4555) is almost the same as for the previous period (4517), which suggests that these sites were on the whole comparatively small in population. Another major difference is that no settlement noticeably exceeds the others in quantity of potsherds collected. Two sites yielded between 400 and 350 potsherds for this period (T. 42 and 38), seven sites between 315 and 226 sherds (T. 45, 33, 28, 24, 32, 25, 34), 15 more between 150 and 60 potsherds (T. 2, 40, 7, 54, 70, 37, 4, 44, 18, 30, 41, 43, 51, 13, 53) and the last 29 each yielded less than 50 potsherds each.

T. 31, which seems to have had a large population in the preceding period, disappears entirely. Faivre's identification of certain potsherds characteristic of the late Khabur/early Mittani, indicates that this site was probably abandoned around the beginning of the Mittani period (see Table II above). The other six sites, which in the preceding period had yielded large quantities of potsherds, once again come out on top of the ranking (in descending order, they are T. 42, 38, 45, 33, 32, 25), but we also see the arrival of two new sites in this group, T. 28 and 24.

Most remarkably, several new sites appear along the Khabur, although only T. 4 makes an honorable showing (sixth) in the population density rankings, and only T. 2 does well (tenth) in terms of potsherds collected. All the other settlements along the river seem to have small populations, a fact which does not seem compatible with the supposed presence nearby of one of the regional capitals.

On the whole, this period is characterized by a proliferation of small settlements or sites with a relatively low population density covering the entirety of the surveyed area. The four most densely populated sites are smaller than 0.5 ha. The sites with the largest geographic area (ca. 4 or 5 ha) only come in at eighteenth or nineteenth for density (T. 33 and 45). This indicates that a major change must have occurred from the preceding period, even though the largest sites are still mostly located in the northern zone.

Table V | List of sites, which yielded potsherds dating to the Mittani period, based on the analysis of all potsherds originally collected. Sites are ordered by quantity of potsherds collected (left column) and by order of population density measured as a ratio of quantity to surface (right column).

Ranking of sites according to number of collected potsherds		Drainage Basin	Surface	Number of collected potsherds of the Khabur Period	Ranking according to population density	
Ranking	Site			Total = 4555	Number of potsherds/ha	Ranking
1	42 (Tell Arbid)	Unnamed Wadi / Jaghjagh	7 ha	402	57,42	22
2	38 (Tell Aïn el Qurd)	Wadi Dara	2,42 ha	353	145,86	8
3	45 (Tell Ahmar)	Unnamed Wadi / Jaghjagh	4,90 ha	315	64,28	19
4	33 (Tell Hanoua)	Aouejj, left bank	ca. 3,90 ha	285	73,07	18
5	28 (Tell Hassek)	Aouejj, right bank	1,50 ha	270	180	7
6	24 (Tell Hermel)	Wadi Zerkan	2 ha	250	125	12
7	32 (Tell Kdich)	Aouejj, right bank	0,80 ha	230	287,5	1
8	25 (Tell Arade)	Wadi Zerkan	1 ha	228	228	5
9	34 (Tell Atach)	Unnamed Wadi / Jaghjagh	2 ha	226	113	14
10	2 (Tell Umm Urhafa)	Khabur, left bank	1,50 ha	147	98	16
11	40 (Tell Qattine)	Unnamed Wadi / Dara	0,50 ha	119	238	3
12	7 (Tell Qattine)	Khabur, right bank	5 ha	98	19,6	37
13	54 (Guir Zil Kabir)	Unnamed Wadi / Jaghjagh	7 ha	96	16	40
14	70 (Tell Badan)	Jaghjagh, right bank	17,50 ha	96	5,48	47

Ranking of sites according to number of collected potsherds		Drainage Basin	Surface	Number of collected potsherds of the Khabur Period	Ranking according to population density	
Ranking	Site			Total = 4555	Number of potsherds/ha	Ranking
15	37 (Tell Bati)	Wadi Rijla / Jaghjagh	5 ha, but settled area only = 1,82 ha ³⁷	96 (mainly A, B, G, H, a bit in E, F, none in C, D)	52,74	24
16	4 (Tell Umm el Asafir)	Khabur, left bank	0,50 ha	96	192	6
17	44 (Guir Diouane)	Unnamed Wadi / Jaghjagh	0,80 ha	88	110	15
18	18 (Tell el Ward Charqi)	Wadi Zerkan	ca. 1 ha	80	80	17
19	30 (Tell Berguil Buz)	Unnamed Wadi / Jaghjagh	0,60 ha	79	131,66	10
20	41 (Tell Baqar)	Unnamed Wadi / Dara	2,20 ha	70	31,81	28
21	43 (Tell Farho)	Wadi Dara	ca. 0,30 ha	70	233,33	4
22	51 (Tell Rhazal Tahtani)	Unnamed Wadi / Zerkan	1,50 ha	65	43,33	25
23	13 (Tell Aïn el Abed)	Wadi Zerkan / source	0,50 ha	65	130	11
24	53 (Tell Kourdis)	Unnamed Wadi / Jaghjagh	2 ha	61	30,5	29
25	14 (Tell Jamilo)	Aouejj, left bank	8 ha	43	5,37	48
26	56 (Tell Nurek)	Wadi Dara	6 ha	42	7	44
27	1 (Tell Rommane)	Khabur, left bank	2,50 ha	42	16,8	39
28	35 (Tell Avguir Fawqani)	Unnamed Wadi / Dara	0,30 ha	35	116,66	13

³⁷ Note that the central part of T. 37, on which houses and a road had been built, was not surveyed, hence the difference between the total size of the site and the size of the settled area in this period.

Ranking of sites according to number of collected potsherds		Drainage Basin	Surface	Number of collected potsherds of the Khabur Period	Ranking according to population density	
Ranking	Site			Total = 4555	Number of potsherds/ha	Ranking
29	60 (Tell Tcholama Tahtani)	Unnamed Wadi / Dara	6 ha	35	5,83	45
30	57 (Tell Chil Virane)	Without wadi / Dara	1,15 ha	34	29,56	30
31	17 (Tell Effendi)	Unnamed Wadi / Jaghjagh	1,90 ha, but the settled area only = 0,84 ha	32 (A, B, C, F)	38,09	26
32	21 (Tell Baarair Kabir)	Without wadi / Jirjib	0,85 ha	30	35,29	27
33	22 (Tell Ed Daudiye)	Without wadi / Jirjib	1,50 ha	30	20	36
34	11 (Tell Atchach)	Khabur, right bank	1 ha	29	29	31
35	58 (Tell Dukri)	Unnamed Wadi / Dara	0,30 ha, but A only = 0,20 ha	28 (A)	140	9
36	5 (Tell Asnane Fawqani)	Khabur, left bank	1,50 ha	27	18	38
37	50 (Tell Mujarja)	Khabur, left bank	0,50 ha	27	54	23
38-	15 (Tell Beydar)	Aouejj, right bank	14,50 ha but the settled area only = 12,90 ha	26 (everywhere except C, D)	2,01	53
39-	23 (Tell Alouq Charqi)	Jirjib Gharbi	0,10 ha	25	250	2
40-	20 (Tell Jamus)	Jirjib	0,40 ha	25	62,5	20
41-	27 (Tell ech Chour Gharbi)	Unnamed Wadi / Zerkani	6 ha	24	4	49

Ranking of sites according to number of collected potsherds		Drainage Basin	Surface	Number of collected potsherds of the Khabur Period	Ranking according to population density	
Ranking	Site			Total = 4555	Number of potsherds/ha	Ranking
42-	29 (Tell Aswad Tahtani)	Unnamed Wadi / Jaghjagh	1 ha, but the settled area only = 0,33 ha	20 (A mainly, and B, C)	60,60	21
43-	6 (Tell Fakhariya)	Khabur, left bank	3,50 ha	20	5,71	46
44-	12 (Tell Ashnane Charqi)	Wadi Zerkan	0,75 ha	16	21,33	35
45-	16 (Tell Khatun)	Aoueij, left bank	1,20 ha	15	12,5	42
46-	3 (Tell Tawil)	Khabur, left bank	1 ha	14	14	41
47-	48 (unnamed)	Aoueij, right bank	0,50 ha	11	22	34
48-	26 (Tell Dabach)	Wadi Seher / Zerkan	3,50 ha but the settled area only = ca. 1 ha	10 (D, F, G, H)	10	43
49-	47 (actual Tell Abu Hufur)	Aoueij, right bank	2,60 ha	9	3,46	51
50-	8 (Tell Majdel)	Khabur, right bank	25 ha but the settled area only = 3,70 ha	9 (A, B)	2,43	52
51-	10 (Tell Tawila)	Khabur, right bank	1,60 ha	6	3,75	50
52-	9 (Tell Chamrane Tahtani)	Khabur, right bank	0,16 ha	4	25	33
53-	11 (unnamed)	Khabur, right bank	0,07 ha	2	28,57	32

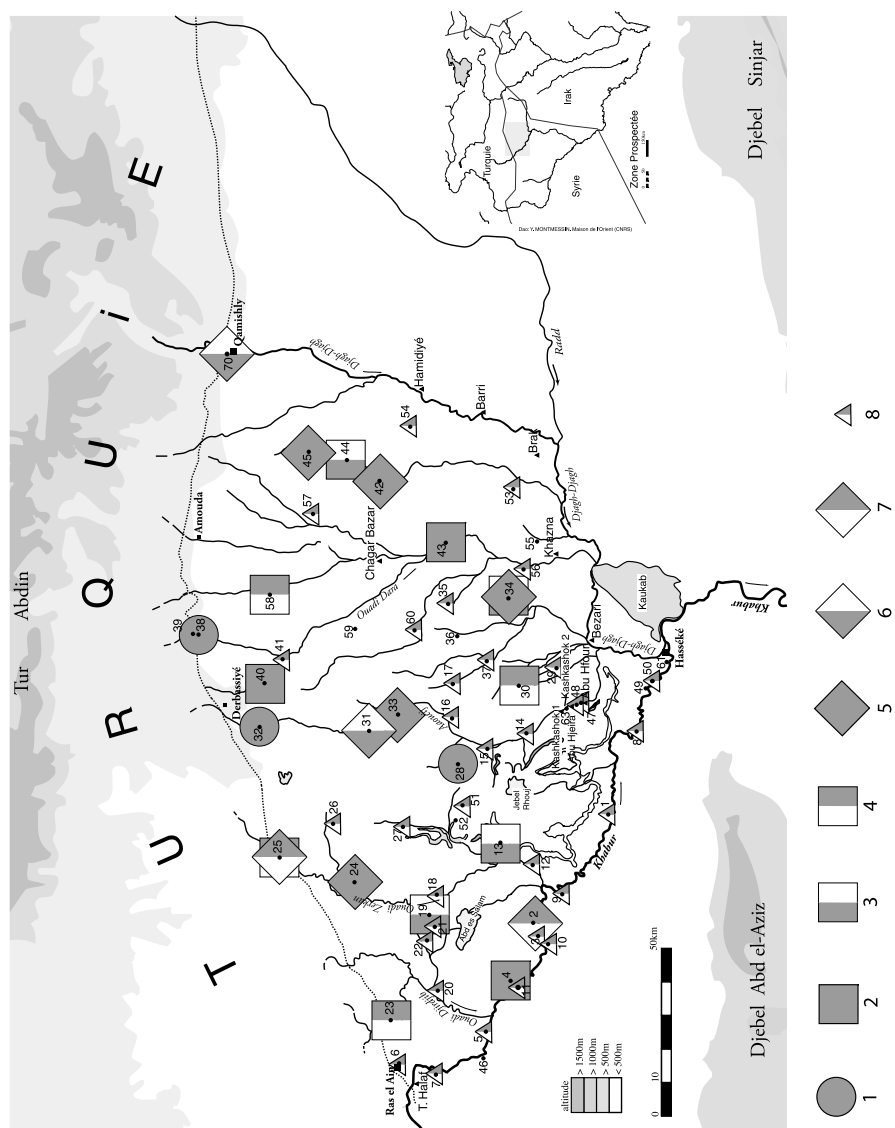


Fig. 2 | Distribution of settlements during the Mittani period according to material from the survey.

- 1- The 10 most densely occupied sites, yielding the largest amount of sherds in the two studies (sherds retained and sherds collected).
- 2- The 10 most densely occupied sites from the two studies.
- 3- The 10 most densely occupied sites from the study of sherds retained.
- 4- The 10 most densely occupied sites from the study of sherds collected.
- 5- The 10 sites yielding most sherds from the two studies.
- 6- The 10 sites yielding the largest amount of sherds from sherds retained
- 7- The 10 sites yielding the largest amount of sherds from sherds collected
- 8- Other sites occupied according to the study of sherds collected.

Conclusion

The data of our field survey have been presented here from different points of view (potsherds retained, potsherds collected, total quantity of potsherds by site and density by hectare). In the end, the results obtained by each of these methods differ little from each other and show a distinct change in the demographics of the region between the “Khabur period” and the Mittani period. The number of sites evolves considerably from one period to the other, and we see clearly new settlements on the banks of the Khabur from the middle of the second millennium onward. However, the population during the Mittani period is clearly dispersed in small villages, as none of the sites surveyed are of urban character (determined by the size and quantity of potsherds). In addition, there seems to be no way of grouping of these villages around a possible undiscovered major site; this contradicts the conventional hypothesis that villages usually crop up as satellites of a major city, and once again raises the unanswered question of the real locations of Waššukanni and Taidu.

Scholars have often discussed the forced resettlement in this region during the Assyrian periods, in particular in the Neo-Assyrian period, but up until now our knowledge of the earlier demographics of the Khabur area was very limited. In isolation, the data of this field survey are not enough to determine definitively the causes for resettlement during the Mittani period: these may include the voluntary or forced settlement of previously nomadic groups, the arrival of new populations, etc. These are all possibilities that the textual documentation will have to clarify. Nevertheless, the fact that the total quantity of potsherds collected is approximately the same for the two periods suggests that there was no general increase in the population between the two periods, but rather a significant change in its distribution. The improvement of climatic conditions in this period probably played a decisive role in the dispersal of the population into small villages over the whole area of the survey.

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Spaces of Measures and Numbers in Upper Mesopotamia

Introduction

Although the study of weights and measures in Mesopotamia has almost as long a history as the decipherment of cuneiform itself, the definition and delimitation of their *spaces of usage* has so far received little attention.¹

Since W. Kula began developing historical metrology as a field in the 1970s,² the focus has mostly been on measures in the Middle Ages and the *Ancien Régime*. The reason for this is quite simply that these periods offer scholars a wealth of surviving material (in the form of both objects and texts) relevant to the complicated relations between communities of merchants, administrators, and political authorities. In addition, there is also a wealth of information on the practices of measuring and weighing. But the history of metrology has no reason to limit itself to these later periods: upon closer examination, we find that the ancient Near East also offers a wealth of materials for the study of metrology. Both textual and archaeological sources provide us with abundant information on the practices of counting, measuring, and weighing. These sources include: tables of monthly totals, units of measures organized into systems (of capacity, weight, length, area, etc.), material weights used for weighing, and vessels for measuring the quantity of specific products.

In fact, the primary difference between the study of weights and measures in Assyriology and Medieval Studies lies in the *analysis* of the sources rather than in their actual *nature*, even if, of course, each of the surviving sources has its own proper characteristics and has therefore to be taken into consideration when analyzing the sources. Specialists in historical metrology tend to focus on the social constraints and practices that govern economic transactions or the use of a certain system of measurement. Historians of the ancient Near East, on the other hand, tend to be concerned with reconstructing the organization behind Mesopotamian systems of weights and measures and translating the value of each unit into our current standards. They are therefore most often concerned with two bodies of source material: administrative texts that record various quantities, and scholarly texts that list out different units of measure.

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1 See Powell’s review of weights and measures (1987–1990) and Chambon’s case studies (2011).

2 See Kula 1984.

This approach to analyzing the values of particular measurement systems allows Assyriologists to estimate quantities of agricultural products, to calculate the volume of commercial activities, and to better understand the spatial and human dimensions of buildings, among other things. It also allows historians of science, who are primarily concerned with the body of scholarly texts, to reconstruct the scribal curriculum and to better understand the level of mathematical knowledge in Mesopotamia. However, this method is little concerned with contextualizing the textual sources. Not so for medievalists: their research, by contrast, is aimed first and foremost at describing the role that the use of weights and measures plays in social practice. Therefore, the objects that they study include, among other things, accounting ledgers, commercial records, and summaries of tax receipts.

With the help of one particular case study, this article hopes to show that the examination of measures in the ancient Near East needs not restrict itself to the quantitative reconstruction of daily life. On the contrary, it also allows us to better define certain socio-cultural practices, which only take on meaning within particular historical contexts, and therefore to better define the spatial contours of political and cultural developments in Upper Mesopotamia during the second millennium BC. In this respect, the main aim of this article is to show that the study of *spaces for the usage of measurement systems* may help our understanding of both the development of *confederate spaces*, including patterns of economic, social, and political organisation beyond the local level, and *conquered space*, defined by its large sphere of economic and political control.

I have deliberately chosen to examine here a corpus that at first glance seems to have nothing to do with historical metrology, even though numbers and units of volume appear throughout. The Royal Correspondence of Mari (Archives Royales de Mari) is an extensive correspondence of two kings of Mari, Yasmaḥ-Addu and Zimrī-Līm (18th century BC), with foreign kings and with the kingdom's high-ranking administrators.³

1 The royal archives of Mari and methodological issues

The importance of this correspondence for metrology is both extrinsic and intrinsic to the documents themselves. First, the wide geographic distribution of the recipients of these letters presents us with the possibility of delimiting *political and cultural spaces* for the usage of measurement systems at both local and regional levels. The kingdom's highest officials, who were in charge of either provinces or important forts, were responsible for regularly reporting the quantities and distribution of grain and other foodstuffs in the locality under their authority. A portion of the supplies had to be sent to the palace at Mari, which had either acquired it via the market or demanded it as a tax. The rest of the supply – reserved

³ For the Mari correspondence see Charpin – Ziegler 2003, 16–18. The corpus of these published letters from Mari can be found online by ARCHIBAB-project under Dominique Charpin's direction (<http://www.archibab.fr/>).

for local soldiers and officials as well as passing troops – also had to be reported to the king of Mari on a regular basis so that unexpected losses could be accounted for. Quantitative reports thus appear regularly in the letters addressed to the king alongside verbal accounts of other administrative concerns, such as the construction and maintenance of buildings and ‘international’ political news.

Thus, the methodology used here and consisting of examining the terminology and paleography of these texts allows us to discern the various *modes of scribal practices* based on the ways in which measures were expressed. Contextualizing the writing conventions in these letters is indeed very interesting. Not long before Yasmaḥ-Addu’s accession in Mari, new rules for writing were introduced into scribal circles at Mari.⁴ This reform did not create a new system of notation in response to new requirements of the administrative bureaucracy, as was the case during the reign of the Akkadian king Naram-Sin in the 23rd century BC. Rather, it had the purpose of creating a standard system of reference – certainly originating in the city of Ešnunna – that would be useful for international correspondence.⁵ The epistolary sources I examine here are governed by these new rules, and thus their impact on the ways in which numbers and measures are expressed is particularly interesting, as numbers and measures normally belong to a particularly personal domain of linguistic expression. After all, we almost always count in our mother tongue.

2 Capacity measures in the letters

There are four systems of capacity measures, used primarily for quantities of grain, that occur predominantly in the correspondence of these two kings: the system of “donkey-loads” based on the total weight a donkey can carry; the *parīsum* system; the gur system; and finally the a-gār (the only system indigenous to Mari). Below are the structures of each of these systems (units are listed from greatest to smallest):

The “donkey-load” System

anše (<i>imêrum</i>)	I		
I (DIŠ)	5/3	I	
bán (<i>sûtum</i>)	10	6	I
silà (<i>qûm</i>)	100	60	10

⁴ See Durand 1988. J.-M. Durand showed that the main evidence for this major reform can be found in the duplicates T.518 and T.519.

⁵ For a bibliography on the writing reform, see Charpin – Ziegler 2003, 40 and note 99.

The *parišum* System

<i>parišum</i> ⁶	1
silà (<i>qûm</i>)	50 or 60

The a-gàr System

a-gàr (<i>ugâru</i>)	1			
gur	10	1		
pá-an (<i>pânum</i>)	20	2	1	
bán (<i>sûtum</i>)	120	12	6	1
silà (<i>qûm</i>)	1200	120	60	10

The gur System

gur (<i>kurru</i>)	1			
1 (DIŠ)	5	1		
bán (<i>sûtum</i>)	30	6	1	
silà (<i>qûm</i>)	300	60	10	

As we can see, the basic unit in all of the systems is the *silà*, and the next unit up in three of the four systems is the *bán* (corresponding to 10 *silà*). The current state of our research does not permit us to conclude whether the absolute value of these units varied from one region to another.⁷ What seems to distinguish these four systems of measurement is, above all, their way of expressing multiples of the basic units: the *anše* was made up of 100 *silà*, the *parišum* of 50 or 60 *silà*, the a-gàr of 1200 *silà*, and the gur of 300 *silà*. It is by establishing a systematic classification for these terms in relation to the context surrounding each letter (sender, recipient, the matter being addressed, etc.) that we can reconstruct the geographic zones in which those terms were principally employed.

The zone in which quantities of grain were expressed in terms of “donkey-loads” includes the regions of Balikh from Upper Jazirah (earlier called Ida-Maraš) to Ekallâtum on the banks of the Tigris – at least according to the letters written to the king of Mari by his administrators and vassals in those areas. For example, Šamaš-tillassu writes to Yasmaḥ-Addu that the grain reserves, measured in “donkey-loads,” should be stored in a secure place at Kahat, in the province of Ida-Maraš.⁸ Bašsum, serving as *sugâgum* at Dêr, to the west of Balikh, informs Zimrî-Lîm that there are no more than 50 “donkey-loads” worth of grain left in the city’s storehouses.⁹ Itûr-Asdû, to whom Zimrî-Lîm had given the administrative

6 In addition to the full form *pa-ri-si*, we sometimes see the abbreviations PA or *pa-ri* (Zeeb 2001), 200.

7 See pertinent remarks in Chambon – Kreppner 2010.

8 ARM II 52.

9 ARM XXVI/I 247.

authority over the city of Naḥur in the Ida-Maraṣ, sent a messenger to his king asking him to order the kings of the Ida-Maraṣ to provide him (Itûr-Asdû) with salt, measured once again in “donkey-loads.”¹⁰ Finally, the “chief of pastures” (*merûm*) in the North, Ibâl-El, explains to Zimrî-Lîm that the kings of the Ida-Maraṣ have sent provisions to the Bedouins; in particular, a certain quantity of barley is listed as having been sent, and is notated in the “donkey-load” system.¹¹

Use of the *parîsu* notation, meanwhile, is limited to northwestern Syria. Several letters show that the prime minister (or overseer of the merchants) of Carchemish, Šidqum-Lânasi, measures the amount of barley that the king of Mari bought from him in *parîsu*.¹² Zimrî-Lîm’s steward at Al(l)ahum/Alalakh, Nûr-Sîn, had to deliver a number of products and commodities to the palace at Mari, and in one of the letters he records the amounts of sesame to be delivered in *parîsu*.¹³

The “gur” notation, employed regularly in sources from southern Mesopotamia, appears only rarely in Zimrî-Lîm’s correspondence. His representative in Babylon, Yarîm-Addu, informs him that soldiers from Mari and Babylon re-provisioned at the city of Sippar. The 200 men received a total of “40 gur” of wheat. A quick calculation reveals that the gur here represents 300 silà and not 120, as was customary at Mari.¹⁴ This system of measurement also seems to have been used in the lands east of Sindjar. Yamši’um, for example, who was stationed in the city of Karanâ, writes to Zimrî-Lîm to voice his displeasure with the Numheans of Ekallâtum, who, suffering from a famine, have come to Karanâ and taken its grain on the order of “2 ½ gur” per person.¹⁵ This is one way of showing that one gur in this region consists of 2 ½ gur at Mari, consisting of 120 silà each.

Finally, the a-gâr system belongs to the scribal repertoire at Mari and was used in Mari’s geographic surroundings as far as the city of Tuttul. This has been determined primarily by examining administrative sources from these cities.¹⁶ Yet the many officials that appear in the royal correspondence of Mari rarely made use of the a-gâr system, despite the fact that it was the principle system of capacity measures used in the capital. On the few occasions when it was used, it always appears in connection with affairs in the province of Mari itself. For example, while Samsî-Addu normally employs the “donkey-load” notation, he makes an exception when he communicates with Yasmaḥ-Addu, as attested in letter ARM I 80. The letter concerns a resident of the city of Saggâratum in the province of Mari, who makes a claim on “10 a-gâr” of grain from the palace. Similarly, Yamši’um, the com-

10 A. 3063; see Guichard 1997, 194.

11 A. 3901.

12 ARM XXVI/2 544 and 545.

13 FM VII, 30.

14 D. Charpin has made the following calculation: 40 gur x 300 silà = 12,000 silà, and 12,000 silà / 200 = 60 silà; see Charpin 1988, 174.

15 ARM XXVI/2 342.

16 For Mari, see, for example, ARM XXI 135–138 et passim. For Tuttul, see: KTT 23, KTT 102, KTT 175 et passim.

mander of the Mari garrison at the city of Ilān-šūrā, situated in Upper Jazirah, uses the “donkey-load” system when he complains to Zimrī-Līm that his soldiers have been receiving unground grain and requests that they be sent flour.¹⁷ On the other hand, when he writes to complain of someone stealing his grain and pillaging his personal domain, located in the region around Mari, he records the damage in a-gār.¹⁸

The borders between the spaces of usage for these measurement systems can sometimes be identified very precisely. The line separating the use of the “donkey-load” system in the north and the use of the a-gār system in the south passes through Qaṭṭunān along the Middle Khabur, at least according to the letters sent by the governors of this region, who vary in their use of the two systems. Zimrī-Addu, for example, uses the “donkey-load” system to discuss the travel provisions that Zimrī-Līm ordered to be delivered to Šarrāya for his return from Mari,¹⁹ but uses the a-gār notation when he tries to justify himself to Zimrī-Līm regarding the grain that the palace of Mari demands from him.²⁰ On the other hand, his predecessor in the administrative post at Qaṭṭunān, Zakira-Hammû, always expresses the quantity of the city’s grain reserves in a-gār.²¹

3 Some reflections on the spatial distribution of measurement systems

I have carried out this study of the usage of the different capacity measurement systems with special attention to two aspects: the practical context of these textual sources (management of grain stocks, disputes concerning quantities of various commodities, rationing for soldiers, etc.) as well as their governing protocols (scribal habits, rules for the writing of epistolary documents, the status of the senders and recipients, etc.).²² In this way, it is possible to move past simply translating capacities of grain from ancient Mesopotamian measurement systems into modern units. In fact, we can make three important claims about the socio-cultural usages of measurement systems.

First, the use of multiple measurement systems in one place can likely be explained through changes in administration and local political and cultural influences rather than by new requirements for the management of goods or changes in daily practices. It is therefore unsurprising that this phenomenon occurs most often in cities situated on the border between different spheres of influence. The continuous tension in Qaṭṭunān – a city controlling the pass between the province of Mari and Upper Jazirah and therefore straddling the political and cultural spheres of these two regions – is reflected in the alternation be-

¹⁷ ARM XXVI/2 314.

¹⁸ ARM XXVI/2 332.

¹⁹ ARM XXVII 129.

²⁰ ARM XXVII 109.

²¹ ARM XXVII 76.

²² See Chambon 2011.

tween the “donkey-load” and the a-gār systems in the correspondence of local administrators.²³ Each change of administration has repercussions on the local vocabulary of measurement: we see, for example, that Zimrī-Addu mentions both the donkey-load and the a-gār, while his predecessor only uses the latter.

This claim is corroborated by administrative texts from Tuttul (Tell Bi’a), a city on the Euphrates, north of the province of Mari. These texts make use of both of these measurement systems.²⁴ This can once again be explained by a change in administration: the use of the “donkey-load” was introduced at Tuttul by high-level officials of Samsī-Addu, directly after the conquest of the city during the eponymy of Ibni-Addu. The same system remained in use until the city fell under the administrative and political control of his son Yasmaḥ-Addu during the eponymy of Rigmānum. At that point the a-gār system, imported from Mari, Yasmaḥ-Addu’s seat of power, became the only method for measuring quantities of products. The study of the use of these measurements provides us with a method of dating; we can assume that texts from Tuttul, on which dates are illegible or absent but which refer to “donkey-loads,” must have been written between the eponymy of Ibni-Addu and that of Rigmānum.²⁵

Second, the administrators that were appointed to posts far away from Mari, in regions with markedly different cultural practices, were able to adopt the local system of measurement without difficulty.

A good example for this is known from the Upper Jazirah region. Šamaš-tillassu, who first served as minister in Mari and then later in Terqa and Tuttul,²⁶ writes regarding grain reserves measured in “donkey-loads” that are to be deposited in a safe place in Kahat. Itūr-Asdû, governor of the districts of Mari and Saggâratum, likewise writes regarding “100 donkey-loads” of salt, as was already mentioned above. The officials clearly borrowed these measurement systems from the local cultures, because the texts written in Mari itself use the a-gār notation exclusively.

Third, we can conclude that the frame of reference for international correspondence, put in place by the writing reform in the 19th century BC, did not bring about a standardization of measurement systems. The names for multiples of the basic unit sila vary considerably within epistolary correspondence, even if they follow the same patterns. The system of notation used in the letters is usually that of the sender, and no system is given any particular precedence over the other in the entire correspondence. In addition, we notice that the scribes never explicitly state equivalences between the different systems. These facts must lead us to believe that the senders as well as the recipients of these letters understood perfectly the various regional terms for measurement, and that the terms therefore

23 For the political context in Qaṭṭunân, see Durand 2010.

24 See the source material collected by Krebernîk 2001.

25 I mean here *KT* 287, *KT* 302, *KT* 313, *KT* 315, and *KT* 339.

26 See Villard 2001, 27.

travelled together with the various commodities – especially those carried from city to city by caravan – all along the trade routes of ancient Mesopotamia.

In conclusion, the study of the vocabulary of measures in the correspondence of the kings of Mari allows us to refine our definition of the *spaces for the usage of measurement systems*, in order to better understand *confederate* and *conquered spaces*. On the one hand, we are able to bring to light the geographic areas within which these different systems were used; this “metric cartography” is confirmed by administrative documents from these areas, in which the local measurement systems are used to note the quantities of given commodities. On the other hand, we must superimpose onto this cartography another dimension that is related to the use for these measurement systems: namely the different ways in which scribes noted down measures. For they do not seem to subscribe to the rules of the standardized international writing style, but rather remain attached to their local habits, which also seems to be understood across the region. The notion of a *spaces for the usage of measurement systems* exhibits various aspects, depending on whether we are looking at administrative practices, cultural influences, political directives, or scribal habits. These various dimensions of the problem are the objects of ongoing research.²⁷

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27 I am pursuing this research under the auspices of HIGEOMES, a project in historical geography directed by Eva Cancik-Kirschbaum and Nele Ziegler which began in January, 2011. My contribution to the project consists of establishing “metric provinces” based on the distribution of the usage and terminology of weights and measures at the local and regional level, and in determining or verifying the origin of texts with an unknown provenance (unearthed in secret digs or on the antiquities market) by way of the metrical information they contain.

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IV Reflections

The Age of Opportunity: Social and Political Transitions in Mid-Second Millennium BC Mesopotamia

In this brief essay I consider aspects of the conference papers on the “transition to Mittani”. The papers have discussed the history of periods and places before the formation of the Mittani state (including Ebla, the Old Assyrian period, Shemshāra and Leilan and Mari) and roughly contemporaneous material from Hittite archives and from Alalakh and other Levantine sites. There were also discussions of environment and subsistence patterns and about pastoral nomads and archaeological data, especially changes in settlement patterns. The organizers asked the participants to focus on the interrelations among local politics (“constituent space”), regional interconnections (“confederate space”), and imperial strategies (“conquered space”).

This sense of place is in recent years a regular subject of inquiry, certainly among archaeologists.¹ For these and many other authors, including geographers and historians, landscapes are constructs of the mind as well as physical and measurable entities. Landscapes are ways of seeing that are projected onto the land and express cultural attitudes. Furthermore, politics operates through space, according to Adam T. Smith (2003), in which space reproduces structures and/or constrains agents.² History is where events occurred as well as when they occurred, and landscapes are constant reminders of history. In the Epic of Gilgamesh, of course, the hero tells his audience that if they doubt his story, they have only to look upon the walls of Uruk to see its verification. Landscapes of the past are also created by historians.

The cartography of political landscapes is mainly approached in this volume by those papers (and in some histories of Mesopotamia) that portray the transition to Mittani rule as the aftermath of a crisis in which landscapes change utterly. This is in particular reference to the end of the Old Babylonian period in Mesopotamia and the long period between the end of the Old Assyrian period and the resumption of centralized political systems in the Middle Assyrian period (under Assuruballit) and the Mittani state. This is often referred to as a “dark age” (since we have no documents from Assyria for several hundred years). In Babylonia the term *dark age* is now less apt, for reasons to be discussed below. In this paper I wonder about the usefulness of the term *dark age*, as well as summarizing the presented

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1 E.g. Ashmore – Knapp 1999; van Dyke 2008; Smith 2003; Johnson 2007 and Yoffee 2007.

2 Soja 2000.

evidence of the papers on the origin of the Mittani state. How is the everyday exercise of power altered by political collapse and the rise of new political systems? How would a non-royal, non-elite citizen of Mesopotamia have viewed and interpreted the crises of their states?

Whereas the perspective of non-elites in Mesopotamia is notoriously difficult to comprehend, historians usually avoid the presumption that all is center and the periphery is not only little apparent but also insignificant. Sometimes, however, this goal is forgotten since the data themselves report overwhelmingly the perspective of those in power, and historians come to identify with their ancient informants. For example, Dominique Charpin presented an excellent paper recently in a conference in honor of Mario Liverani. It was titled “the flight of slaves as a major social problem in Mari”, and in it the author carefully assembled dozens of cases in which the crown had to confront the flight of slaves from control of Mari officials.³ However, reversing this royalist perspective, one might have said, basing interpretation on the same data that were presented, that the flight of slaves was a major opportunity for the enslaved to seek better lives. This analysis of “opportunity” leads to the title of my brief essay for this volume and to a concise look at the phenomena of collapse of the Old Assyrian and Old Babylonian states. If there was a transition to Mittani (and to Kassite) state(s), what was there a collapse from?

The history of the end of the Old Assyrian state of Šamši-Adad and his sons needs only brief retelling, and Jesper Eidem’s paper (see above p.137–146, with appropriate references to scholars of the Mari archives) tells it: Šamši-Adad was “brilliant”, but his regime was “desperately chaotic” with barely a “semblance of cohesion” and “lacked any real legitimacy ... The almost immediate collapse of the kingdom following the death of Šamši-Adad seems to support this impression of extreme vulnerability.”⁴ If the old city-state of Assur’s political system and socio-economic structure (reported by Cécile Michel, see p. 111–136) was irrevocably altered by the usurper’s imperial ambitions, the demise of the empire reduced “Assyria” and the “Kingdom of the North” to their rural base.

This set the stage for new political and social opportunities, as Eva von Dassow and Eidem (see p. 11–32 and p. 137–146) report. Šamši-Adad’s adventures to the East across the Tigris and into the Zagros met a number of political units, some of them, like “Turukkum”, with Hurrian names of states, cities, and kings. Hurrian statelets fought with their neighbors, especially Gutians, and with Kassites who were consolidating into political units themselves to the south and east. These conflicts led to migrations, according to Eidem, to the East into the Khabur region where other Hurrians (as well as other people, non-Hurrians) lived (in relatively small sites, according to Rafał Koliński (see p. 179–212), in a mixture that also included nomads, according to Diederik Meijer, see p. 163–178). The migration of East

3 “Un problem social majeur: le fuite dans le Proche-Orient (Xxe–XVIIe siècles av. J.-C.).” The conference, “Antico Oriente: Nonsolostoria” took place in Rome, 20–21 April 2009.

4 See above, p. 138.

Hurrians into the area gave a selective advantage to Hurrian political leaders and was the major impetus for the formation of a Mittani state. Eidem suggested at the conference that it may have been the proximity of East Hurrians, who lived in Urmia Basin, to Indo-European speakers, who were just to the north of this area, which accounted for the Indo-European names and terms at Alalakh and in Boğazköy. Stefano de Martino (see p. 61–74) presents a thorough review of the Hittites' contacts with Hurrians.

It remains to say a few words about the so-called collapse of the Old Babylonian state and the opportunities for new political confederations to emerge in Babylonia and which had contacts eventually with Mittani along with new opportunities for local social mobility.

In 1595 BC the last king of the dynasty of Hammurabi (its sixth king) was defeated by a marauding Hittite force. Since – until recently – no documents after the collapse of the dynasty were found until around 1420 BC,⁵ this period of time has been called a *dark age*: “The lack of centralized power [in Babylonia] led to discontinuation of administrative and scribal practices as the levels of economic and cultural activities decreased. Texts were only sparingly written and we have thus no data with which to work. We enter into a ‘Dark Age’.”⁶

Now, the 175 years of textual silence become severely reduced if the date of 1595 BC, according to the middle chronology, becomes 1531 BC in the short chronology – about 111 years, and even more if the ultra-short chronology's date for the fall of Babylon, 1499 BC, is accepted – about 79 years.⁷ In the time of roughly the late 16th – early 15th century BC there appears the first reference to “Mittani”, around 1490 BC, in an Egyptian text. In Hittite sources the references to Hurrians in northern Mesopotamia are earlier, around 1550 BC (de Martino, see p. 61–74). The *dark age* is also the time of kings of Ḫana at Terqa who ruled at the time of the last OB king and thereafter.⁸ The most recent evidence of what was happening in the *dark age* in Babylonia is provided by Stephanie Dalley⁹ who has published texts of Sealand Dynasty kings who ruled in southern Babylonia (according to Dalley) from 1550–1480 BC. For the sake of argument, although Dalley does not use the short chronology, these years would be from 1486–1416 BC in the short chronology – with the date of the fall of Babylon at 1531 BC. In sum, the *dark age* is not as dark as it used to be.

If the *dark age* is supposed to be a collapse of centralized power in Babylonia to a time of “decrease” in economic and cultural activities, what kind of centralized power collapsed and why?

For some the Old Babylonian period is the “Amorite period”.¹⁰ This is so-called, apparently, because the names of most of the kings of Babylonia are in the Amorite language, as are names of many Babylonian citizens, there are Amorite terms, mainly from Mari

5 Podany 2002; Brinkman 1976.

6 Van De Mieroop 2007, 122.

7 Gasche et al. 1998a and b.

8 Podany 2002; Rouault 2004.

9 Dalley 2009 and 2010.

10 E.g. Charpin 2004.

archives, and there are many names of Amorite sub-groups (sometimes called “tribes”). Nevertheless, there is just as obviously no indication of an Amorite horde descending in Mesopotamia, no leader of all Amorites – indeed Amorite princes fought mainly with other Amorite princes, making alliances, claiming solidarity with kin-group leaders – and Amorites adopted Akkadian and Sumerian names and practices. There are precious few indications of an Amorite belief system or customs (especially few outside of Syria), and there is not a single document written in the Amorite language. If one keeps in mind the orientation of the conference on “cultural space”, one may argue that Amorites were trying hard to be good Mesopotamians, copying Sumerian and Akkadian texts in scribal schools, worshipping Mesopotamian gods, being citizens of Mesopotamian city-states and battling, in the venerable Mesopotamian way, other city-states.

As is well known, the political system erected by King Hammurabi, which included all of middle and southern Babylonia, and the reaches of the Euphrates as far as Mari and Terqa, and the Diyala, lasted about 12 years. These include the last 4 years of Hammurabi’s reign and first 8 years of his son and successor. In the 8th year of Samsu-iluna a rebellion in the south broke out and by the end of that king’s reign, the south was lost. Apparently, kings of Sealand Dynasty,¹¹ heirs to Sumerian traditions, if the names of the kings are any indication, ruled from rural outposts, since several of the southern cities were abandoned, at least for a short time. Soon, Sealand Dynasty kings ruled from cities, perhaps secondary capitals in the Lagash-Girsu region.

During the reign of the last kings of Babylon, although some military campaigns were launched, for example in the region of Terqa, but also in the south, the power of the kings was fragile.¹² In cities, local “headmen” authorized the hire of workers on crown estates,¹³ and autonomous military cadres established bases in the rural hinterlands.¹⁴ Some of these cadres were Kassites, who alternately lived in Babylonian cities, were mercenaries for Babylonian kings, and were disruptive forces for the weakened kings of Babylon. When the Hittite army marched on Babylon, they did not face much opposition. As Sealand Dynasty kings were ruling in southern Babylonia, Kassites were organizing a new political power base in northern Babylonia.

To conclude this synopsis of history in the middle of the second millennium BC, we can view the transition to Mittani rule as part of new state building in northern Mesopotamia, as well as the transition to Kassite rule in Babylonia. Sealand kings were ruling in southern Mesopotamia, successfully fending off sporadic campaigns from kings in Babylon, who ruled only a small area around Babylon itself, about the same territory as had been established by Sumula’el of Babylon. Eventually, Kassite rulers were able to incorporate the

¹¹ Dalley 2010.

¹² Van Koppen 2004; Richardson 2005.

¹³ Yoffee 1977; Stol 1976.

¹⁴ Van Koppen 2004; Richardson 2005.

south in their own state. In the north the small states, whose political systems were in part led by elders, councils, and mayors (von Dassow, see above p. 11–32), were subsumed under Mittanian and Assyrian leaders. This picture of contested space is not so much that of a *dark age* as it is an age of opportunity.

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Reflections on the Mittani Emergence

The genesis of the Mittani polity is a research problem of no little difficulty, and the organizers of the Topoi conference deserve credit for attempting to extend the frontiers of our knowledge on the issue. Admittedly, many of the contributions in this volume steer clear of the topic except in a decidedly tangential fashion, but in their state-of-the art presentations on west Asian Bronze Age issues they provide a broad foundation for future work. In this short paper, I offer a few observations and reflections on some of the issues relevant to Mittani's origins.

As is customary, we must be aware of the limitations of our evidence. In this case, those inadequacies are especially daunting, in that there is a scarcity of both textual and archaeological data relevant to the origins of the Mittani state. This is not surprising, since documentation generally tends to be more profuse in periods of state florescence, when central institutions are in full operation, than in the period when a new polity forms.¹ We face similar restrictions when considering the emergence of the first states in Uruk Mesopotamia, dynastic Egypt, the Sargonic "empire" of Akkad, and many other cases. Rare exceptions to this rule might include Šamši-Adad's kingdom of upper Mesopotamia in the early second millennium BC, although this is a state that failed to outlast its founder, or the Hittite Old Kingdom (see above Klinger, p. 75–90; Michel, p. 111–136).²

Given the scarcity of archaeological and textual data, there are several possible approaches to studying the Mittani emergence. One is to examine the period of Mittani's florescence and then project backwards, searching for clues to its origins in the institutions or records of its later eras, as has been done for the origins of Mesopotamian civilization in the fourth millennium BC.³ Another is to consider the period prior to Mittani's emergence and project forward, while a third tack is to examine data from regions outside Mittani for evidence relevant to upper Mesopotamia and Syria at the time of Mittani state formation. The papers in this volume offer evidence and arguments that fall into each of these three categories. At present, they combine to produce a picture that remains frustratingly incomplete, but hints of progress can be discerned.

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¹ Textual evidence is likely to be meager in the period before full-scale bureaucracy has been installed, while archaeologists tend to gravitate toward contexts that produce monumental architecture, which is also less likely to derive from the onset of a new political system.

² An example from a completely different time and place is that of late 18th century AD Hawai'i, whose emergence as a unified kingdom was observed and recorded by European and American witnesses (and participants); Kirch 2010.

³ Algaze 2008.

In addition to the issue of minimal evidence, there are difficulties of dating. West Asian absolute chronology for the early-middle second millennium BC remains problematic, with competing chronological models still battling for acceptance.⁴ De Martino (p. 61–74) has discussed two primary temporal schemes relating to the birth of the Mittani state, one dating the event prior to the collapse of Yamḥad and the other assigning it to a period after the withdrawal of the forces of Murshili I, a scenario de Martino prefers. If we consider the two most widely-utilized absolute chronological models, the Middle Chronology, dating the fall of Babylon to 1595 BC (or, in the modified Middle Chronology, 1580 BC)⁵ and the ultra-low chronology dating the fall of Babylon to 1499 BC,⁶ we arrive at the four following possibilities, bearing in mind that Egyptian sources reveal that Mittani was in existence by at least ca. 1500 BC:

Middle Chronology:

1. If Mittani appears before the fall of Yamḥad, it has a long early history (ca. 1700/1650–1500 BC) with very little documentation.
2. If Mittani's origins begin sometime after Murshili I's withdrawal, there is a "Dark Age" of political fragmentation after the collapse of Yamḥad lasting ca. 50–100 years (ca. 1600/1550–1500 BC).

Ultra-Low Chronology:

3. If Mittani appears before the fall of Yamḥad, it has a relatively brief and meagerly documented early history (ca. 1600/1550–1500 BC).
4. If Mittani emerges after Murshili I's withdrawal ca. 1500 BC, its genesis would be approximately synchronous with the first Egyptian campaigns against it.

Options 1 and 4 appear to be the least likely of the four possibilities, but one cannot rule out any of them definitively.

The archaeological evidence also presents chronological problems. There is a recognized distinction between Middle and Late Bronze Age material culture assemblages in Syria and upper Mesopotamia that must date to the mid-second millennium BC, but the transition from MB to LB is a smooth one, and assemblages from the period of late MB to early LB are not necessarily easy to distinguish from one another. Even if later MB and early LB strata were easy to differentiate from each other, it is not at all certain that this break corresponds to the transition from pre-Mittani to Mittani political hegemony.⁷ Of course, one should not expect political change to be concurrent with shifts in material culture, but with-

4 Schwartz 2008.

5 Michel – Rocher 2000; Michel 2002.

6 Gasche et al. 1998.

7 Moreover, the Jazirah was incorporated into the Mittanian polity before western Syria or Cilicia, which means that early LB west of the Euphrates probably includes a pre-Mittani phase.

out such synchronicity, the assignment of specific strata to the period of Mittani's emergence will be difficult or impossible.

Despite these problems, progress is being made on our understanding of mid-late second millennium material culture sequences in upper Mesopotamia and Syria with the publication of data from Tall al-Rimah, Tall Bderi, Tall Brak, and elsewhere.⁸ Some of the authors of these publications have suggested candidates for diagnostics of the onset of Mittani control. One example is the light-on-dark painted Nuzi Ware.⁹ Unfortunately, the employment of Nuzi Ware as a diagnostic of Mittani is problematic because the pottery is relatively rare and only fitfully appears in surface survey collections, as opposed to the more abundant Khabur Ware of the preceding period. It is also not clear that the first appearance of Nuzi Ware necessarily coincides with the emergence of Mittani in every case.

Given the contexts Nuzi Ware is found in, these ceramics are interpretable as high-quality luxury products associated with the elite of the Mittani empire.¹⁰ It is curious that pottery is once again a marker of high social status after the many centuries when other artifactual media fulfilled that function. Since the political and social institutions found throughout the Mittani realm show considerable variability (see above Dassow, p. 11–32 and Otto, p. 33–60), Nuzi Ware might have functioned as an integrative instrument, a marker of Mittani elite identity tying diverse local authorities to the imperial center.¹¹ The role of this pottery, particularly manifested in the shape of goblets, in contexts of ceremonial or celebratory wine (?) -drinking might reward further consideration.¹²

Other ceramic diagnostics associated with the Mittani period include piecrust potstands and red-edged bowls¹³ but, as with Nuzi Ware, it is not clear if their appearance is synchronous with that of Mittani.¹⁴ Also common throughout the Mittani kingdom are large shallow bowls with simple rounded rims, sometimes so flat as to be characterized as plates.¹⁵ Whether these appear at the same time as Mittani rule is, again, uncertain.

8 Postgate et al. 1997; Pfälzner 1995 and 2007; Oates et al. 1997.

9 Oates et al. 1997, 67; Postgate et al. 1997, 54 f.; “... its origins coincide with the period of Mittani hegemony”, Oates et al. 1997, 67.

10 Postgate et al. 1997, 54.

11 The core-molded glass objects that also become popular luxury items in the period might be viewed in a similar light.

12 Bunimovitz – Greenberg 2004; Mazzoni 1994.

13 Postgate et al. 1997, 56; Oates et al. 1997, 73; “... one of the most distinctive Mitanni innovations”.

14 Pfälzner 2007, 240 proposes that Dark on Buff Animal Ornamented Ware is associated particularly with the early Mittani period (in his terminology, Middle Jazirah IA), but it is also found in the pre-Mittani (Middle Bronze) era (Faivre – Nicolle 2007, plate 9, 269, 309; Oates et al. 1997, 71 f.; Postgate et al. 1997, 53).

15 Akkermans – Schwartz 2003, 332, fig. 10.3a-c; Czichon – Werner 2008, Taf. 83, 88–90, 96–99; Oates et al. 1997, 168–171, fig. 184, 63–76, fig. 185, 81–89; Mazzoni 2002, pl. 60, 33, 35, pl. 61, 41–44.

The popularity of these shallow bowls merits further examination. For example, one might inquire whether the upsurge in their frequency was associated with a change in foodways. A shift from the deeper bowls of the Middle Bronze Age¹⁶ to the shallow Late Bronze bowls might entail a transition from the prevalence of more liquid foods (e.g. stews, soups) to more solid culinary productions. If the proliferation of shallow bowls indeed marks a change in cuisine, such developments may be coincident with such political and economic circumstances as migration, social rivalry, or social emulation.¹⁷ The new political and cultural importance of the Hurrians could be relevant, since ethnic groups often have cuisines that materialize the concept of shared ethnic identity.¹⁸ Perhaps the rise of many Hurrians to social prominence by the beginning of the Late Bronze Age resulted in the emulation of their behaviors, including food preparation, by others. If this idea has any traction, it would have to be demonstrated that Hurrian culinary traditions are inferrable from pottery from the pre-Mittani as well as Mittani periods.¹⁹

Indeed, a major problem in the study of the Mittani emergence is ethnicity. In contrast to the preceding period when Semitic languages were predominant, Hurrian becomes the norm for personal names and, apparently, for the spoken language in Mittani, even as far southwest as Qatna.²⁰ Hurrians seem to be understood as an ethnic group by the Hittites and others who refer to the “king of the Hurri lands” or “king of the Hurri troops”. If Hurrian was the language of the Mittani elite, then naming practices and the use of the language itself could have been emulated by the subject population.²¹ It is in any case doubtful, as von Dassow explains, that the Hurrianization of the Mittani zone involved a mass migration of Hurrian speakers from the highlands to the lowlands.

A more general question is why Bronze and Iron Age Syro-Mesopotamia was prone to repeated ethnic changeovers, from Amorite to Hurrian to Aramaean. Why did certain ethnic groups and languages enjoy prominence and power and then recede from view, and why does ethnicity come into play in certain periods and places and not others (cf., for instance, the paucity of ethnic references in third-millennium Syro-Mesopotamian texts)? One might propose that ethnicity is significant in cases when non-state populations come

16 E.g. Nigro 2002, pls. 46. 48. 52. 54.

17 Mintz – Du Bois 2002.

18 Emberling 1997; Macheachern 1998. Present-day ethnography has noted that migrants not only bring in new culinary styles but influence their neighbors’ cooking as well, Lockwood – Lockwood 2000.

19 It must also be conceded that the distinction between Middle and Late Bronze bowls discussed here is not completely sharp – there are shallow bowls in the Middle Bronze assemblages and deeper bowls in the Late Bronze.

20 Richter 2005. As Biga (p. 93–110) notes, the use of Hurrian is not apparent in Syria or northern Mesopotamia until the Akkadian period. In the Middle Bronze Age, Hurrian language and onomastica become increasingly evident and finally predominate in the Mittani period. Of course, the “Hurrianization” of Syro-Mesopotamia was not total, even in the Late Bronze period. One can observe substantial Semitic onomastica in Late Bronze texts from middle Euphrates sites such as Munbaqa and Terqa; Mayer 2001; Podany 2002.

21 Note that the same process did not take place in southern Mesopotamia, which was controlled by a Kassite dynasty but showed no signs of linguistic or onomastic “Kassitization”.

into contact (and conflict) with state organizations, or when non-state populations come into conflict with one another.²²

Since the focus of the Topoi project is “space”, it is appropriate that papers in the volume examine Mittani as a spatial and geographical phenomenon (e.g. Koliński, Lyonnet, Otto).²³ Previous assessments of survey data from the Middle to Late Bronze Age in the Mittani region have emphasized a steady decline in the number of sedentary sites from the Middle to Late Bronze periods, or a move from tells to low, dispersed sites.²⁴ Such a pattern of declining sedentism is observable from the southern Levant²⁵ to Babylonia.²⁶ The increasing aridification of the second millennium may be relevant, but undoubtedly other variables must be taken into consideration. In his detailed synthesis, Koliński (see p. 179–212) reveals that this picture of sedentary decline is not uniform, with some subregions evincing an upsurge in sedentary habitation at the same time that others see a sedentary reduction.

With the decline of tells, the cultural landscape changed, with high, conspicuously visible communities replaced by lower, more temporary sites. In this new visual reality, the many tells of the Mittani landscape would be ghostly reminders of a former way of life, in contrast to the new unobtrusive communities. The psychological and cultural effects of such a landscape change would be important to investigate.

Not only are nucleated tells on the decline, but the Mittani period sees a major shift in urban sites in the Jazirah, the Mittani heartland. In this region, urban centers that had dominated political and economic life for many centuries were nearly if not totally abandoned by the end of the Middle Bronze Age – e.g. Tuttul (Tall Bi’a), Šeḫnā/Šubat-Enlil (Tall Leilan), and Mari (Tall Hariri). New urban and political centers took their place in the Mittani period, such as Tall Fakhariya (Waššukani?) and Tall Hamidiya (Taidu?). It will be important to determine when, how, and why these new urban centers were developed, and the role of the Mittani central authorities in instigating the process.

If there is a diminution of sedentism, are we to assume an uptick in the number of people practicing a lifestyle of mobile pastoralism? Meijer, Lyonnet, and Guichard (this volume) discuss the importance of nomadic pastoralism in the period of the Mari texts, with the king of Mari himself identified as a member of a group that included a large nomadic component. But the Amorite kingdoms with pastoralist connections like those of Zimri-Lîm and Šamši-Adad collapsed by the late 18th century, perhaps the result of the inherent weaknesses of “tribal” states.²⁷ In the Mittani period, despite the apparent decline in seden-

22 Emberling 1997; Levy 2009, 155f.

23 Chambon’s (see above, p. 247–255) interesting exercise in “metric cartography” in the Middle Bronze Age provides another approach to the examination of place.

24 Wilkinson 2003; Ur et al. 2011.

25 Gonen 1984; Bunimovitz 1995.

26 Adams 1981.

27 Ristvet 2012.

tism, nomadic pastoralists are much less visible in the textual record, and the Mittani state has no obvious pastoralist element. Groups such as the Ahlamu may have been the successors to the Simalites and Yaminites of the Mari texts, but they seem to play a much smaller role in the functioning and concerns of the Mittani state, as far as one can discern. Hurrians from polities in the Zagros or Taurus highlands may have been active participants in the formation of Mittani (see below), but there is no evidence yet to support the involvement of highland pastoralist groups. The relative inconspicuousness of pastoral nomads in the Mittani kingdom is particularly striking given the recurrence of elites with nomadic pastoralist connections in the Iron Age, when Aramaeans dominated an array of polities in the Jazirah and the west.

As Meijer notes (see above, p. 163–178), the conceptualization of “nomads” as people totally separate from sedentists is probably misleading, since many pastoralists were likely to be attached to sedentary villages and led their flocks out to graze for some months only to return to the village later in the year.²⁸ Meijer’s suggestion of the dichotomy town/country to replace nomad/sedentary has its own problems, however, since there is unlikely to be a clear distinction between the latter two types.²⁹ But even conceding the frequent integration of pastoralist and agriculturalist, one must still acknowledge the existence of large groups of “tribal” pastoralists conducting a mobile lifestyle, as detailed in the Mari texts.³⁰ Presumably the Ahlamu of the Late Bronze Age are comparable entities.

Broadening our spatial perspective, it will be important to consider the role that people from neighboring regions might have played in the formation of the Mittani polity.³¹ Since the major political entities of Late Bronze Age West Asia – Kassite Babylonia, Old Kingdom Hatti, and Mittani – emerged at roughly the same time, after a period of confusion and paucity of written documentation, their interrelationships during state formation would be important to examine.³² Actions emanating from polity to polity were likely to be recursive.

To the south, Babylonia was a traditional source of cultural and ideological models and technologies, as can be seen in the Middle Bronze Age when the Amorite rulers of Syro-Mesopotamia (and also the Hurrian Turukkeans – see in this volume Eidem, p. 137–146) emulated southern Mesopotamian architectural and glyptic styles, scribal practices, and royal ideologies. Such emulation seems to taper off in the later Middle Bronze Age, and the

28 See also Porter 2011. On the fluidity of nomad-sedentary lifestyles, see, however, Alizadeh’s 2009, 131 cautionary remarks on the difficulties of switching from farming to nomadic pastoralism.

29 See the recent trend among archaeologists to eschew bipolar typologies like male/female, body/mind, subject/object altogether, Meskell 2005. But one should take care not to go too far in rejecting all typology, since science is based on classification, as is, indeed, human thought – words themselves are “types” representing classes of entities.

30 Ristvet 2012 notes tellingly that there is no textual evidence for such groups in the third millennium, arguing that they only came into existence in the early second millennium BC.

31 Stein 2002.

32 For example, Forlanini 2009, 57 proposes that both Mittani and Kassite Babylonia emerged from the unification of mercenary groups.

role of southern Mesopotamia as a model to be utilized in the legitimization of Mittani rule seems relatively muted. While writing in Akkadian cuneiform remains the convention for scribal bureaucracy, this practice is likely to have been inherited from the preceding upper Mesopotamian polities rather than directly copied from southern Mesopotamia. Likewise, southern Mesopotamian elements in Mittani glyptic largely seem to have been inherited from Old Babylonian seals.³³

In the northwest, Mittani faced the newly formed Hittite polity. The belligerence of the early Old Hittite rulers towards their neighbors in the southeast must have had significant political and social effects. As Eidem (citing von Dassow) notes, it is likely that the threat posed by the Hittite forces of Hattushili I and Murshili I against the various Hurrian-dominated polities of upper Mesopotamia helped to precipitate the unification of those polities into a single entity.

Economic interconnections with neighboring regions will also be significant, as Biga (this volume, p. 93–110) illuminates for the third millennium. The role of long-distance exchange, the acquisition of exotic preciosities by an emerging Mittani elite,³⁴ and other economic variables are important concerns that studies of Mittani origins should consider. Intra-regional aspects of the economy such as subsistence production or craft manufacture, largely overlooked by the contributors to this volume, are also important (but see in this volume p. 33–60 Otto's comments on craft production in domestic contexts). The consideration of ecofactual data, at present only minimally available,³⁵ will be an important addition to our discussion when accessible in greater profusion. At Umm el-Marra in the Jabbul plain of western Syria, for example, a specialized focus on onager-hunting in the Middle Bronze period was replaced by a more diversified, localized animal economy in the Late Bronze period.³⁶ It will be necessary to determine how this shift in animal exploitation was or was not related to larger events in the rise of Mittani.³⁷

The paucity of attention to issues of subsistence and daily life in this volume (exceptions are provided by Otto and von Dassow) is undoubtedly connected to our discipline's characteristic focus on the elite. But the non-elite, the peasant, the slave, all played major roles in the societies in question and need to be integrated into our discussion.

Moving from issues of space, we may consider temporal variables. Of potential importance is social memory and its uses in the creation of the Mittani state.³⁸ Ideas, ideologies, and institutions may have been borrowed from previous polities in order to set the foun-

33 Matthews 1990, 47f.

34 Compare the gift-exchange conducted by the later third millennium polities discussed by Biga (see above, p. 93–110), or the similar activities undertaken by the Near Eastern rulers in the Amarna period.

35 E.g. van Zeist 1994; Riehl 2009; Smith – Munro 2009.

36 Weber in Schwartz et al. 2000; for other comments on the ecofactual data see Miller in Schwartz et al. 2000 and Schwartz – Miller 2007.

37 Adam Maskevich, Johns Hopkins University, is preparing a Ph.D. dissertation on the Mittani period occupation at Umm el-Marra.

38 van Dyke – Alcock 2003; Mills – Walker 2008; Connerton 1989.

dations for Mittani rule.³⁹ By the 14th century BC at least, it is clear that reference to the Mittani royal past was important, given the employment of “dynastic seals”, whereby the reigning Mittani king used the seal of a predecessor in his own administrative transactions, legitimizing his authority through emphasis of his royal lineage.⁴⁰ Although, as von Dassow observes, there are no tales of the kingdom’s founders preserved in Mittani documents, de Martino notes that the name of the kingdom, etymologized as “land of Maitta”, may refer to an eponymous founder.

Relevant to the question of memory is the vexatious Indo-Iranian (or Indo-Aryan) connection. It appears that the Mittani kings adopted throne names in an Indo-Iranian language, even though they spoke Hurrian. Von Dassow is no doubt correct that the emergence of Mittani did not entail the influx of a large population of Indo-Iranian-speaking immigrants from the east, but the fact that the Mittani kings consistently used Indo-Iranian throne names still requires explanation. Likewise, the mention of Vedic gods in the Shattiwaza treaty and the possible derivation of the designation for the Mittani elite class (*maryanni*) from an Indo-Iranian word cannot easily be dismissed.⁴¹ The power of memory in the Indo-Iranian case is particularly striking in that Indo-Iranian concepts and terminologies remained potent late in Mittani history, as demonstrated by the later 14th century BC date of the Shattiwaza treaty. If the Mittani elite had its origins in the Hurrian polities of western Iran, a possibility Eidem advances, this might help in understanding the problem: some Indo-Iranian speaking individuals or groups moving through or into Iran may have played important roles in western Iranian Hurrian territories. New archaeological information from central Asia, where groups speaking Indo-European languages and employing the horse and chariot were residing in the second millennium BC, should prove of use as this question is pursued. Anthony⁴² suggests that Mittani was “founded by Old Indic-speaking mercenaries, perhaps charioteers ...” and speculates that they originated in the Indo-European-speaking chariot-riding Andronovo/Tazabagyab cultures of Bactria and Margiana.⁴³

Although von Dassow insists that Mittani success must be attributed to other factors, the role of the horse and chariot is another piece of the Mittani puzzle that deserves more attention. The importance of chariotry in Mittani is well-demonstrated by its clear affiliation with the *maryanni* elite class, while Mittani equestrian capabilities are well-documented in the Kikkuli horse-training text. The connection to Central Asian chariot riders posited by Anthony is, at present, tenuous, but should not be peremptorily rejected.

39 Bronson 2006. For example, Eidem (see above, p. 137–146) floats the idea that the Mittani rulers emulated Shamshi-Adad by establishing their capital in the Upper Khabur, a strategic intermediary region. One must acknowledge, however, the significant time gap between the two sets of monarchs.

40 Auerbach 1991.

41 Kuhrt 1995, 297.

42 Anthony 2007, 50, 454.

43 Forlanini 2009, 57 also proposes that Hurrian mercenary groups coalesced under the leadership of a clan of Indo-Iranian origin.



Figure 1 | Terracotta plaques from Umm el-Marra: (left) fragmentary plaque with team of horses preserved; (right) charioteer with a bow and a team of horses.

Despite the importance of chariotry in Mittani, images of chariots are relatively uncommon in Mittani representational art, indicating that the Mittani elite employed other symbols to demonstrate their authority and legitimacy.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, an addition to the small corpus of such representations has been provided by the excavations at Umm el-Marra, where two examples of Mittani period terracotta plaques depicting horse-drawn chariots have been recovered (Fig. 1).⁴⁵

Given the current state of our evidence, we will continue to find the issue of Mittani origins difficult to understand and explicate. But it is a problem likely to continue to attract interest, as problems of origins tend to do, and we have reason to hope that the results from continued excavations at sites like Fakhariya, Hamidiya, and Brak as well as sites not yet tested – even, perhaps in Iraq – will be of assistance.

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⁴⁴ Feldman – Sauvage 2010.

⁴⁵ For the complete example, found in the Acropolis North in 1999, see discussion in Schwartz et al. 2003, 351–353. The fragmentary specimen was found in 2008 below the mound surface in the Acropolis Northwest trench 1226/3906 together with other Late Bronze artifactual materials such as pottery and a terracotta zebu figurine.

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Abbreviations

AAAS	Les Annales Archéologiques Arabes Syriennes
AASOR	Annual of the American Schools of the Oriental Research (in Jerusalem)
AfO	Archiv für Orientforschung
AHw	W. von Soden, Akkadisches Handwörterbuch
AJA	American Journal of Archaeology
AKT	Ankara Kültepe tableteri, Ankaraner Kültepe-Texte (Ankara 1990)
ALT	D. J. Wiseman, The Alalakh Tablets (London 1953)
ANES	Ancient Near Eastern Studies
AO	1) Der Alte Orient (Leipzig 1900ff.) – 2) Museum siglum Louvre (Antiquités orientales)
AoF	Altorientalische Forschungen
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
ArchAn.	Archivum Anatolicum
ARES	Archivi reali di Ebla. Studi
ARET	Archivi reali di Ebla. Testi
ARM	Archives Royales de Mari
ArScAn	Archéologies et Sciences de l'Antiquité
AuOr	Aula Orientalis
BagM	Baghdader Mitteilungen
BAR IS	British Archaeological Reports. International Series
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
BATSH	Berichte der Ausgrabungen Tall Šēḫ Ḥamad/Dūr-Katlimmu
BBVO	Berliner Beiträge zum Vorderen Orient
BMECCJ	Bulletin of the Middle Eastern Culture Center in Japan
CNIP	Carsten Niebuhr Institute Publications
CRRAI	Compte Rendu de la Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale
CTH	L. Laroche, Catalogue des textes hittites (Paris 1966)
DaF	Damaszener Forschungen
DamM	Damaszener Mitteilungen
DBH	Dresdner Beiträge zur Hethitologie
FM	Florilegium Marianum
HANE	History of the Ancient Near East (M=Monographs / S=Studies)
HdO	Handbuch der Orientalistik
HSAO	Heidelberger Studien zum Alten Orient
HSS	Harvard Semitic Series
IBoT	Istanbul Arkeoloji Müzelerinde bulunan Boğazköy tabletleri

ICK	Inscriptions cunéiformes du Kultépé, vol 1: B. Hrozný (Prag 1952); vol. 2: L. Matouš (Prag 1962)
IOS	Israel Oriental Studies
JAR	Journal of Archaeological Research
JCS	Journal of Cuneiform Studies
JEOL	Jaarbericht Ex Oriente Lux
JEN	Joint Expedition with the Iraq Museum at Nuzi (= Publications of the Baghdad School. Texts, 1–6, Paris/Philadelphia 1927–1939)
JESHO	Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient
KBo	Keilschrifttexte aus Boğazköy
Kt	Siglum for Kültepe tablets found since 1948
KTS	Keilschrifttexte in den Antiken-Museen zu Istanbul – Vol. 1: J. Lewy (Konstantinopel 1926); Vol. 2: V. Donbaz (= FAOS Beih. 2, 1989)
KUB	Keilschrifturkunden aus Boğazköy
LAPO	Littératures Anciennes du Proche Orient
MASCA	Museum Applied Science Center for Archaeology, University of Pennsylvania
MDOG	Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft zu Berlin
MEE	Materiali Epigrafici de Ebla
OAAS	Old Assyrian Archives, Studies
OBO	Orbus Biblicus et Orientalis
OIP	Oriental Institute Publications
Or	Orientalia
OrAnt	Oriens Antiquus. Rivista del Centro per la antichità e la storia dell'Arte del Vicino Oriente
PIHANS	Publications de l'Institut historique et archéologique néerlandais de Stamboul
RA	Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie Orientale
RHA	Revue Hittite et Asianique
RIA	Reallexikon der Assyrologie
SCCNH	Studies on the Civilization and Culture of Nuzi and the Hurrians
SMEA	Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici
StBoT	Studien zu den Boğazköy-Texten
StMed	Studia Mediterranea
THeth	Texte der Hethiter
TM	Find siglum Tell Mardikh
TPAK	C. Michel – P. Garelli, Tablettes paléo-assyriennes de Kültepe (Paris 1997)
TTKY	Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınlarından. Publications of the Turkish Historical Society
TUAT	Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments

UF	Ugarit-Forschungen
WVDOG	Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orientgesellschaft
WZKM	Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes
ZA	Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie

Indices

Please note: Conventions on the transcription of foreign names (antique and modern) differ. For the sake of clarity the editors decided to harmonize slightly.

Italicized page numbers refer to pages where the term appears in the footnotes.

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